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Alternate Routes

A Critical Review Vol. 3 1979

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Production**
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Editorial Board: Jim Conley, Joan St. Laurent, Eileen Saundere

Alternate Routes is an annual publication of graduate students in Sociology and anthropology. Manuscripts, subscriptions and communications should be addressed to:

Alternate Routes
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The editorial board wishes to establish a genuine forum for the exchange of ideas. We welcome critical responses, commentaries or rejoinders, which we will endeavour to publish in subsequent issues.

The editors gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, and its Chairperson, Dennis Forcese. We also wish to thank Don Cruikshank for her administrative assistance.

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Alternate Routes is a critical review of sociology and related disciplines. We strive to publish the critical work of graduate students which will inform and be of interest to students and teachers of social science. In our view, sociologists must be critical, both of their own society and of the work of other social analysts. We seek, therefore, to publish work which challenges existing sociological and societal orthodoxies. To achieve this goal we require manuscripts. We encourage graduate students among our readers to submit essays, reviews, commentaries and rejoinders on a wide variety of subjects. We particularly welcome work which treats some aspect of Canadian society within the wider concerns of critical social science.

ISBN 0-7709-0061-5

JOHN PORTER

1921 - 1979

The editors of Alternate Routes wish to acknowledge the contributions of the late John Porter to Carleton University, to Canadian sociology, and to the academic community at large.

His seminal work, The Vertical Mosaic (1965), stands as a benchmark in the development of sociological analyses of Canadian society, serving to encourage the continuing investigation of the nature of social inequality. While best known for this book, Dr. Porter was also the author of numerous other works, including Canadian Social Structure: A Statistical Profile, and Does Money Matter? (co-authored with Marion Porter and Bernard Blishen).

John Porter will be keenly missed, as a scholar, as a member of the university community, and above all, for graduate students at Carleton, as a teacher committed to his students and to their training as critical, skilled sociologists.

THE POLITICS OF PROBABILITY

Phil Heiple

"Statistics" was first used in the middle of the sixteenth century and related to matters concerning the state. Statistics continued in this sense for the next two hundred years. These matters of state concern became more and more numerical and summary methods were used. These provided a framework for social policy and also played a rhetorical function of legitimation due to popular attitudes toward exact figures (Kendall, 1972:196; Clark, 1937:122-124).

By the mid-seventeenth century, mathematicians, physicists, astronomers and other scientists adopted and advanced the summary methods of statistics. These advances were aided by the developing systems of rational accounting in use in business and by the philosophies of natural science developed by Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, and Newton (Clark, 1937:79, 133-137; Kendall, 1972:197).

Quantification was first being attempted as a form of social thought at this time. The general background was the rational spirit of rising capitalism and the increasing size of different countries which necessitated a more impersonal and abstract basis for public administration. Specific attempts were related to concrete problems of refining the numerical bases of the new insurance systems and to the mercantilists' belief that population size was a crucial factor in the wealth and power of the state (Douglas, 1971a:50; Lazarsfeld, 1961:279).

New economic conditions forced the new importance of records-keeping for political assessment. Changing modes of production led to prolonged depression and massive unemployment throughout Europe. Vagrancy laws and institutionalized houses of confinement were among the bureaucratic responses to these conditions (c.f., Chambliss, 1964; Foucault, 1965).

These required systematic records as well as agencies charged with the execution of these tasks. This was the beginnings of the bureaucracies of official morality. The growing size and complexity of Western societies created a need for some form of accountable information which could be legally and morally sanctioned as the basis for policy judgments (Douglas, 1971b:51-52).

The symbiosis of quantitative social thought with the analytical and calculating form of thought of the bourgeoisie had advanced by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the point where social statisticians and official statistics helped promote a formal standardization of morality as justice and helped civil service and state interventionist power to grow and to become increasingly remote from the qualitative relations of a socially produced and understood world. This is compatible with what Weber depicted as the rationalizing character of bureaucratic thought, which Lukacs later depicted as fundamental to the process of capitalist reification.

Parallel with the late-nineteenth century transition from entrepreneurial capitalism to corporate capitalism and the administrative welfare state of the New Deal, sociology in the United States abandoned early descriptive participant-observer methods (e.g. Chicago School) in favor of survey methods and the analysis of official statistics. By the 1930's, sociological methods as represented by the increasing number of methods texts came to be synonymous with quantitative analysis (Douglas, 1971a:55). Articles in social science journals from 1895 to the present reveal an increasing use of quantification and statistical manipulation. Snizek (1975:42--424) found that these methods tended to produce "A realist view of social reality, often associated with the fallacy of reification, ... one that focuses on group properties in hopes of discovering the structural laws that govern behavior" (1975:416).

Statistical reasoning's claim to validity in social analysis is that

the calculus of probability adequately describes the relative likelihood of events occurring in the social world. Or, as Blalock (1960:509) negatively stated it:

If probabilities are unknown, it will be impossible to make legitimate use of statistical inference.

I am interpreting this to mean that probability theory is the philosophical (i.e., metaphysical) link between statistical measurement and the world of observables. This dichotomy is interesting. Blalock (1960:19) himself evokes it in an anticipatory aside where he says, "This is a question of fact which is irrelevant to the question of whether or not there is a legitimate unit of measurement." To me, the irrelevant is relevant.

My basic thesis is that methods and politics are inseparable because methods for social analysis always contain certain presuppositions about the nature of the social world. Insofar as these presuppositions express or imply a concept or evaluation of social order, or an excuse or means to evaluate social order, they are metaphysical. These metaphysics are a metaphysics of normality. They delimit the scope of normal social relations and are therefore political in their implications for social life.

Antonio Gramsci's criticism of the law of large numbers illustrates this approach. In brief, the law of large numbers states that the larger the number of samples the greater the likelihood (probability) that their average will approximate the average of the population from which they were drawn. Several times in the Prison Notebooks Gramsci (1971:401, 412) mentions the usefulness of this concept for analysing the quantitative expressions of social phenomena. This is acceptable because it does not pretend to avoid selecting for specific characteristics of the sample. When dealing with human subjects, however, Gramsci (1971:428-429) finds the law of large numbers (and the concept of statistical law generally) to be deeply flawed:

But the fact has not been properly emphasized that statistical laws can be employed in the science and art of politics only so long as the great masses of the population remain (or at least are reputed to remain) essentially passive, in relation to the questions which interest historians and politicians. Furthermore, the extension of statistics to the science and art of politics can have very serious consequences to the extent that it is adopted for working out future perspectives and programmes of action ... Indeed in politics the assumption of the law of statistics as an essential law operating of necessity is not only a scientific error, but becomes a practical error in action ... It should be observed that political action tends precisely to rouse the masses from passivity, in other words to destroy the law of large numbers.

Gramsci is arguing that the law of large numbers contains an important presupposition about its unit of analysis. The presupposition is that the unit of analysis is a passive object. Gramsci points out that the unit of analysis cannot be an active subject. It cannot be in a state of becoming i.e., it cannot be in a state that is undergoing any kind of qualitative change. This is the metaphysic of normality for the law of large numbers. It delimits its units to static relations. Even if stochastic measures are used, only quantitative changes are possible. In short, it systematically ignores the possibility of a revolutionary subject.

Gramsci did not attempt a study of probability theory to see if metaphysics of normality were only accidentally and occasionally present, or generally so. In the next several pages I will survey probability theory with a search for metaphysics in mind.

First, let me delineate which issues in probability theory I will be addressing. Three perspectives dominate modern probability theory: the "objective" or "frequentist" position, the "subjective" or "personalist" approach, and the "logical" theory of probability. Putting aside the logical theory for a moment, the distinction between the objective and subjective theories can be posed by their different accounts of the relationship between the concept of probability and the nature of probable knowledge. According to the objectivist position, probability is an

objective characteristic of a multi-leveled physical reality. Probable knowledge is knowledge of one of those levels and is incomplete because of the incompleteness of our information. Strict determinacy is assumed in the physical reality. Statistical methods are used to bridge the gap between insufficient information and the strict determinacy of objective reality. The objectivist position is the predominant form of probability theory used in the social sciences. The less widely held subjectivist position holds that our knowledge of physical reality is inevitably limited in principle and that our knowledge is therefore only probably true. This is the interpretation of probability predominant in orthodox quantum physics: the quantum level is the level of inseparability between the knower and the object known where the knower is nonetheless compelled to speak of the object as if it were not affected by the knower, which results in statements of only probable validity.

Statistical methods are employed to express the degree of certitude the knower attaches to these statements (Suppes, 1969:238-242). Quantum theory is, in part, a theory of the indeterminateness of knowledge. No such theory exists in the social sciences, although, to me, its adoption there is long overdue.

The logical theory of probability is not in use in the social sciences. Unsuccessful attempts have been made to formulate social probability along the lines of the logical theory. Basically, the logical theory of probability directly addresses the problem of metaphysical content. It tries to avoid metaphysics with a strictly inductive non-demonstrative mathematical logic of self-evident maxims. In this it is hoped that all subjective judgments will be precluded.

My basic thesis on probability is that it is in essence metaphysical and all attempts to remove the metaphysical content are doomed to fail. Further, I will argue that it is precisely because of the metaphysical

content that probability theory has been useful to quantitative social scientists. This usefulness is in large part a function of the degree to which the metaphysics of probability are compatible with the hegemonic ideologies of social science. I will try to illustrate this thesis with a few brief looks at the origins and development of the modern theory of probability.

Byrne (1968:292-293) provides the following thumbnail sketch of the development of the calculus of probability:

In the course of time, Cardano and then Pascal and Fermat came to recognize that gambler's rules already in existence might provide a more effective instrument with which to deal with the contingent. These gambler's rules they and then others developed and systematized.

That this more or less systematic instrument of the non-systematic came to be known as a calculus is due not only to its character as a mathematical instrument but to imitation and adulation of the great new instrument of the systematic, the calculus of Leibnitz and Newton ...

... the new instrument thus inaugurated was eventually systematized by Laplace according to standards of his day. But it is important to bear in mind that what is now a demonstrative system in its own right began as an instrument to deal with the non-systematic on the basis of a new theory about how to express the non-systematic: not disjunctively but in terms of a continuum of values between what happens always and what never happens.

The "notion of non-systematic" needs clarification. Byrne (1968:285) writes:

Notion is here taken in a general sense broader than that of concept and is meant to imply, without further precision, awareness of or consciousness of. Non-systematic is also taken in a broad sense and is meant to imply non-necessity, or non-certain, or non-demonstrated, or even non-scientific in the Thomist sense which is not unrelated to the modern 'indeterminate'. Being negative non-systematic is meant to imply also 'with respect to a given system.'

Thereby what one calls non-systematic will depend on one's conception of a system. For example, if Newtonian mechanics is taken to be the system, then the non-systematic will be all the relevant phenomena not explained by Newtonian mechanics. This was, in fact, the original relation of the

non-systematic: the first probabilists were trying to develop an instrument to handle specifically what was non-systematic with respect to the Newtonian system of celestial mechanics. Whereas the Newtonian mechanics replaced medieval cosmology, the founders of probability theory sought to replace medieval disputational means of discerning the probability of judgments. The medieval concepts of probability as (1) probabilis: an argumentatively supported proposition, and (2) contingens: events that occur either ut in pluribus or ut in paucioribus were carried over into the new probability theory as (1) the logical interpretation: probability or degree of confirmation of a proposition, and (2) mathematical interpretation: probability or relative frequency of a class of variables (Byrne, 1968:302).

Now let us take a look at the leading models and see what manifestations these concepts have once fully articulated.

The logical theory of probability, as I mentioned earlier, is not in use in the social sciences, but it does indicate the culmination of a particular line of probabilistic thinking and is noteworthy in this respect. Following a theme initiated by Leibniz, attempts have been made to develop a general logic combining formal logic and the calculus of probability. John Venn, C.S. Peirce, Richard von Mises, Hans Reichenbach, and J.M. Keynes all made contributions toward this project, and the work of Rudolf Carnap represents its most successful formulation (Byrne, 1968:20-21; Nagel, 1939:42-43). Carnap distinguished between probability as (1) degree of confirmation, and (2) relative frequency over time. Taking the former as his problematic, he says, "A definition of an explicandum for probability must not refer to any person and his beliefs but only to the two sentences and their logical properties within a given language system" (Carnap, 1950:43; quoted in Byrne, 1968:21). Hence, a deliberate attempt is made to control opinionative (metaphysical) content. Carnap's approach to probability is part

of his project to develop a wholly non-demonstrative inductive logic. The basic problem lies in consistently assigning numerical values to the degrees of confirmation for opinionative judgments. Carnap believes that quantification is the only guarantor of this needed consistency (1950:220-226). As a general logic, all this could be constructed on the basis of elementary set theory, which Carnap proceeds to do. However, the effectiveness of the construction is problematical. It is already disputable whether opinionative judgments about contingent events are in any sense quantitative and hence mathematically formalizable. Carnap suggests that this issue is merely technical: if the logic can be constructed, then it will be effective (1950:242).

Yet, as Byrne (1968:22) points out, that a formal logic can ever be capable of such a task is seriously challenged by two important theorems of meta-logic: Craig's and Godel's. Craig's theorem is for replacing a formal linguistic system of theoretical terms with another with the same empirical content but no theoretical terms. Nagel (1961:135-137) shows that this method of replacement becomes unworkable when the subject axioms (in this case opinionative judgments) are very numerous and that in order to specify the replacement axioms the set of true statements about the subject axioms must be closed (i.e., known in advance). Byrne (1968: 22-23) adds that opinionative judgments are at least numerous and in principle unlimited and that the very notion of opinionative judgments entails openness for the set of true statements about them. Godel's theorem shows that formal axiomatic systems such as Carnap's are necessarily incomplete in that proof of internal consistency (in this case, effectiveness) cannot be made within that system. Instead, such proofs must come from without -- a requirement that puts Carnap's entire project of a non-demonstrative inductive logic into serious question (Nagel and Newman, 1958:96-97). In sum, although the issue is not yet closed, there appear to be insurmountable

obstacles confronting a non-metaphysical logic of probability at levels both material (Craig's theorem) and formal (Gödel's theorem).

The mathematical theory of probability is like the logical theory of probability in that it can be constructed out of elementary set theory but would be subject to the critique of Gödel's theorem if metaphysical assumptions were not acknowledged. As with Carnap's logical theory, the question being posed of the mathematical theory is not the adequacy of the formal system, but rather the interpretation of that system. While there are numerous ways that a mathematical theory of probability could be built upon the arithmetic of proper fractions (Nagel, 1939:40-41), the linkages between the formal system and physical events would have to be drawn extra-mathematically. As Venn (1962:87; quoted in Byrne, 1968: 31) observes:

When Probability is ... divorced from direct reference to objects, as it substantially is by not being founded upon experience, it simply resolves itself into the common algebraical or arithmetical doctrine of Permutations and Combinations.

Emil Borel and George Polya suggest that the link is to be established by the practical certitude of the user. Borel is distrustful of the opinion of a single individual, because it is too likely to be subjective. Objective certitude arises through the common agreement of many prudent individuals. Borel (quoted in Byrne, 1968:18) states:

The only reason why we regard as certain some well demonstrated mathematical facts ... is that the demonstrations have been reconsidered and verified by a large number of persons.

It is fair to infer that these persons are assumed to be mathematicians, thus creating an elite consensus theory of truth (to which I will return in my examination of Polanyi's views). It is also fair to make a strict logical rejection of this view on the grounds that it is tautological: Borel seeks to justify practical applications of the mathematical theory of probability, which would include the law of large numbers, through reference to a practical situation in which the law of large numbers is

apparently assumed to be valid a priori. Polya avoids the errors of Carnap and Borel by admitting that a formal system is neither self-justifying nor connected to an observable reality in a non-mediated way. According to Polya, we can, nonetheless, approach a formal system as if it were integrally connected to observable reality, insofar as it is plausible to do so. Polya (1954a:198-199) outlines the grounds of plausibility:

... the credence that we place in a conjecture is bound to depend on our whole background, on the scientific atmosphere of our time ... In dealing with the observable reality, we can never arrive at any demonstrative truth, we have always to rely on some plausible ground.

I think Polya points in the right direction. Why does probability theory have credibility as a deductive system? It has credibility only because it conforms to our background expectations about what a deductive system is like. Why is there such confidence in the applicability of probability theory to social phenomena? Because our background assumptions about the nature of social phenomena makes such application entirely plausible (though non-demonstrable). In this, Polya is making tacit reference to what I have been calling a "metaphysics of normality." The only thing he has not done is put this into its historical and political context. I hope that the first part of this essay succeeded in establishing some of this context: (1) probability theory was adopted as a technique for use within the general method of quantitative social thought, wherein the conception of social phenomenon employed necessitated the assumptions that social reality had a pre-categorical facticity, that human behavior was quantifiable, and that these quantities had corresponding elements in number theory; and (2) this development was instrumental (a) to the rising bourgeoisie's interest in the rational planning of society through bureaucracies of official morality, and (b) to the ability to legitimate bourgeois rule through rhetorical reference to hard, numerical, quantitative science. In sum,

probability theory is plausibly applied to social phenomena because we have historically arrived at reified conceptions of what social phenomena are like and how to study them.

Of all the probabilists surveyed thus far, some have acknowledged the presence of metaphysics in their conceptions of science and others have asserted its absence. Of those who recognize the incompleteness or impossibility of logical and/or mathematical formulations of social probability without metaphysical presuppositions, none have tried to specify the use of metaphysics in this enterprise. Micheal Polanyi is an exception.

Polanyi provides a strong but ultimately circular critique of the myth of scientific objectivity. Against the view of the relationship between science and its object as being impersonal and dispassionate, Polanyi (1964) presents a wealth of evidence from the history of science to show that in all forms of knowing there is a tacit dimension which is ultimately more important than any established scientific method, evidence, or explanation. This dimension is the "personal participation of the knower in all acts of understanding" (1964:xiii). This participation is the effect of the opinions, prejudices, and preconceptions (i.e., metaphysics) of the knower upon the act of knowing. For the scientist, these would include "personal obligations to universal standards" (1964:17). With regards to probability, a probability statement is an incomplete and personal commitment according to one's framework of personal judgment (1964:29). Probability statements are thereby partially formalized within certain maxims understood to be no more than "rules of the art" (thus utilizing the strengths of an internally-consistent system without the weaknesses of extra-systemic truth claims) (1964:30-31). Polanyi recognizes that the scientist acts in dialogue with other scientists and with the traditions and norms of scientific practice, i.e., the social nature of science and,

hence, the social character of personal commitment. This means that a scientist's personal commitment to "universal standards" is influenced by factors outside the scientist. Polanyi (1964:375) considers the influence on scientists to be "superior knowlege," which he defines, as "beside the systems of science and other factual truths, all that is coherently believed to be right and excellent by men within their culture." This "network of confidence" enables science to survive as a "coherent system of superior knowledge, upheld by people mutually recognizing each other as scientists, and acknowledged by modern society as its guide." Full of post-Enlightenment optimism, Polanyi becomes a propagandist for a hegemonic elite technocracy. Well aware of the horrors of Stalinist and Nazi scientism (1964:224-245), Polanyi nonetheless opts for an elite consesus theory of truth. Despite his sympathy for Galileo, Mesmer, D.C.Miller, and other victim s of elite hegemony, nowhere does Polanyi question the ability of the present scientific community to make the right decisions at the right times. He improves probability theory by including metaphysics in the creative act of probability assertion, but capitulates to bourgeois hegemony by not institutionalizing any means to critically reflect upon the metaphysics received. Polya (1948: 208-209) recognizes this as a procedural necessity: "No idea is really bad, unless we are uncritical ... Don't let your suspicion, or guess, or conjecture grow without examination till it becomes ineradicable. At any rate, in theoretical matters, the best of ideas is hurt by uncritical acceptance and thrives on critical examination." In contradistinction, Polanyi is advocating what I warn against: technocratic planning by scientists uncritical of their own metaphysical presuppositions.

Some of the general problems of probability theory have been demonstrated. More difficulties arise when it is used in social science. This can be demonstrated by examining the ways it is used there.

One way probability theory enters the methods of social research is

as an aid to sampling statistics. There it is used to ensure the selection of a representative sample. The problem it solves is the problem created by purposive sampling -- maybe we can control for all extraneous variables we can anticipate, but what about extraneous variables we have not anticipated? Ford (1975:271) describes Fisher's solution through probability sampling:

His idea was to go about the whole business of casting for samples the other way around. If you can select imaginary variables to render them systematic, then, he reasoned, perhaps you can unselect the unimaginary ones to render them unsystematic. If you can be reasonably sure that their variation is indeed unsystematic from the point of view of your theory, then you can assume that any biases in your sample are also unsystematic, so these biases can be regarded as irrelevant from all conceivable points of view and thus can be ignored.

The key to this is randomization. Through randomization it is hoped that there will be no relevant differences between the sample and the universe from which it is drawn, and therefore any differences present are irrelevant. Once you have a sample whose members were as equally likely to have been drawn as all those in the universe from which they came,, the calculus of probability may be employed to calculate the probability that your sample is biased in any relevant respect (Ford, 1968:273).

This is all well and good as long as one is dealing with experimental data but, as Selvin (1957) has pointed out, when non-experimental data are used certain problems arise. Since the data are non-experimental, the researcher has no grounds for believing that there are no correlated biases greater than the random errors in the sample. These biases may have even an undetectable supressor effect. This rules out the calculus of probability (in this case, tests of significance). According to Selvin (1957:522), "... only when all important correlated biases have been controlled is it legitimate to measure the possible influence of random errors by statistical tests of significance." Of course, in order to control "all

important correlated biases" it is necessary to know what they are. This sounds to me like purposive sampling. If Selvin is right, then probability sampling is randomly-collected purposive sampling with the assumption that there are no correlated biases greater than the random errors (a metaphysic of normality).

While finding value in Selvin, Ford takes a different route to the same conclusion. She looks at the formal mathematics involved, specifically the requirement that "Whenever the separate probability values of all mutually exclusive units are added together at the same time, the result must add up to 1" (1975:290). That this is impossible to link with events has been recognized in some statistical circles. In 1948 G.A. Barnard criticized H. Jeffreys' social statistics on this point (it is equally applicable to the school of R.A. Fisher):

The snag in Professor Jeffreys' theory is that to work it one has to specify a probability distribution for a class of alternative hypotheses and the whole of the probability has to be distributed. One must when interpreting one's experiments be able to think of all possible explanations of the data, and that, I think, none of us believe that we can do. It is always possible for someone to produce later an entirely new explanation we had never thought of, and which would not be represented in the hypothesis nor in the alternatives we had tested. (quoted in Hogben, 1957:25.)

Ford (1975:291) sees this as a severe restriction of the applicability of probability statistics in general:

For, unless the cases under consideration at any particular level of analysis may be properly regarded as derivable from a precisely defined and logically exhaustive set of non-overlapping (i.e., mutually exclusive) units, then none of the impressive methods and techniques of probability theory will be applicable.

The case against probability sampling is especially strong, for instead of solving the problems of purposive sampling, the formal requirements of the calculus of probability mean that they can only be employed "within a clearly defined set of units, that is, within a PURPOSIVE SAMPLE" (Ford, 1975:291, her emphasis).

An illustration of latent political bias is provided by an extension of Neuberg's (1977:4-5, 20) critique of objectivist probability on the grounds of the unique character of a social event. He argues that social-level events (such as France becoming a monarchy) occur in a manner which cannot be recreated by replicating the circumstances. This is equally true for individual elements of a random sample. Neuberg (1977:5) argues:

The usual situation in a social-statistical study is a population model ... The a priori assumption is that each element of the sample has been drawn at random, under similar circumstances, from the same population. If this assumption is not fulfilled the meaningfulness of the resulting explanation is open to question. One area, for example, where the assumption appears systematically doubtful is in econometric time-series analysis. Here the sample points are, originally, possibly distant from each other in social-level time. It is difficult to conceive a sense in which the elements of such a sample have been "drawn at random, under similar circumstances, from the same population". Hence the uniqueness of social-level events is the basis of an explanation of the explanatory unreliability of econometric time-series models over longer periods of time.

Neuberg (1977:19-20) briefly notes that this may be because of the "special quality of social-level (= historical) time" and cites Lukacs' (1971:89-90) argument that reified thought "degrades time to the dimension of space." In this way "time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things' ... in short, it becomes space."

I would extend this argument somewhat to underscore the a priori assumption that social time is quantitative (Newtonian). Gurvitch (1964: 27-38) argues that social time is a conceptual derivative of a world-view and varies considerably within world-views according to need. Husserl (1964:29, 77) argues that social time is wholly constituted by the experiential subject and that phenomenal time (e.g. standard time) has nothing more than an ascriptive status. Both of these positions seriously challenge the assumption that time frames between unique events are comparable in any quantitative sense. This assumption has three additional features -- the metaphysics of normality -- which make the theorem politically

conservative:

- (1) The social subject cannot be an active participant in social time, either physically (e.g., intervening in such a way as to cause changes within the time frame) or cognitively (reflecting upon, interpreting, or reconstituting the experience of social time);
- (2) No part of the time frame can be anything other than a quantitative development of earlier parts (e.g., quantum leaps in time are precluded as well as any concept of determinism other than a linear causal model. The possibilities/probabilities for the future are wholly limited to quantitative developments of the present.);
- (3) If social time is viewed as Newtonian space, then motive forces to change states would have to be extrinsic to the subjects at hand. This makes it possible for the subjects to be wholly quantifiable, i.e., for all behavior to be subsumed by and understood through number theory. To assume that social behavior can be subsumed by number theory is to believe that the limitations of numerical formulations do not apply to social analysis or social behavior. This metaphysics of normality is also the logical error of affirming the consequent because the second premise affirms the consequence of the hypothetical first premise.

Probability theory is only for the testing of judgments. It is when probability is seen as referring to material occurrence, i.e., events, that the confusion of causality and probability comes about. While I have no sympathy for any causal models in social research, probability in no way fits into a causal model. The concept of a probabilistic law is only possible when the unknown, a feature of judgments, is viewed as a material force in social events. This is one of the most common errors of bourgeois thought: to equate one's way of thinking about the world with the way things happen in the world (mistaking epistemology for ontology). In this way probability theory could be viewed as a source for social theory inductively drawn from frequency distributions (recall Snizek's (1975) finding that mode of analysis determines theoretical perspective). Logical grounds for rejecting inductively obtained explanations are given by Hempel, who finds probabilistic laws to have nothing other than analogic credibility (1966:67). I think the most explicit dismissal of any connection between causal laws and probabilistic reasoning is provided by

Polya (1954b:100), who imagines a doctor trying to comfort a patient with the remark, "You have a very serious disease. Of ten persons who get this disease, only one survives. But do not worry. It is lucky you came to me, for I have recently had nine patients with this disease and they all died of it."

My final remark on probability theory as a method in social science deals with several small points made previously about the conflation of events with judgments and about the closed and unambiguous set of transformations available to probability. It has been suggested that graduate study in the social sciences is chiefly a process of indoctrination which occurs surreptitiously through the acquisition of a new language (Pozzuto, 1975:20-21, 166-171). The notion that social probability is a language unto itself is plausible. In Wittgenstein's view, language is a socially shared and practiced activity through which we learn and know what things are: "We predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it" (Wittgenstein, 1953:46). That the truth claims of a language cannot be made within that language, but rather must be established through a richer language, is demonstrated by Tarski (1944:341-376). What this means for the problem at hand is that if it is true that social probability is a language or like a language, then it constitutes a picture of the world whose validity cannot be established within its own logic. Instead, validation must come from without, and I think I know where. Consider the plausibility of the following experiment.

Go back in mnemonic time to your first indoctrination session into the secret meta-language of statistical probabilistic social analysis. Remember all the examples about coins, dice, cards, and roulette wheels which made the case for the applicability of probability to social analysis so strong. Those examples mystified us.

The problem is that social-level events simply do not occur within

the same conditions necessary to say anything meaningful about the coins, dice, cards, and roulette wheels. In the case of the latter, it is not by chance that one knows the total distribution of probabilities, i.e., that a coin has two faces, that dice have six sides, and so on. In fact, the key concept of the latter is that everyone has full and complete knowledge of the total set of possibilities. It is in terms of this knowledge that meaningful frequencies can be calculated because everything relevant is known about them.

The basic law of social statistics is that you must have a representative sample. Powerful and effective randomizing techniques are available to ensure this. But in ensuring representation, they also ensure that the parameters of the sample are unknown. Nothing is known about the sample except that it is unknown and that anything discovered about it will be new data, i.e., everything relevant is unknown about it.

This difference between dice, etc., and random samples, is irreducible and prevents transferability from one system to the next. Nonetheless inductive leaps are frequently made between the two levels because of common sensical habits of mind. Gramsci (1971:419) said that common sense is "the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average (person) is developed," The inductive leap is facilely made because of the pre-reflective habit of mind to think quantitatively and probabilistically about social events as a way of using human foresight in planning one's day. Life under capitalism predisposes people to pervasive habits of this sort in that every part of one's day can be fractured into discrete units, the manipulation of which is rarely reflectively regarded. The dominant ideas in social reasoning (common-sensical or quantitative-probabilistic) conform to the ideology of the ruling class.

In sum, probability theory is a logic, a language, a set theory, or a way of commonsensical reasoning; the connection of which to social events can only be inductively (metaphysically) established. Rather than making the link to the social world for statistical methods, probability theory is a stalking horse with which we can be ideological and confirm our commonsensical presuppositions about the social world while appearing to be scientific and anti-metaphysical. (Perhaps the discipline selects for people who are predisposed to this sort of reasoning; just the fact that all these people at some time in their lives decided to go to graduate school indicates they are all gamblers to a certain extent).

Finally, I wish to conclude by returning to a point raised previously; the connection between quantitative social thought and the "analytical and calculating form of thought of the bourgeoisie."

Douglas (1971b:58-59) believes that there are two major points of confluence:

First, (bureaucratic rationality) contributed the view of men and their actions as absolute categories (or absolute typifications). That is, rather than see men and their actions as the continuous, situation-bound, concrete persons we normally assume for our purposes of everyday interaction, it saw them as discrete, discontinuous phenomena that are independent of time and situations. It is this set of properties which is necessary before one can validly apply real numbers and mathematical analyses to human beings and their actions; it is this assumption that generates the pigeon-hole perspective on man known to all students of introductory methods in the social sciences ...

Second, this calculative attitude was fundamental to the development of the rational policy orientation of officials and rulers that made official information the means of 'testing' and 'proving' the effectiveness of official policies ... the calculation of the effects of official action relative to the policy-determined practices (i.e., effectiveness) was fundamental to the development of all official information.

Quantitative methods have a legitimating function. Despite the undermining of the rhetorical claim to absolute rationality by twentieth century physical scientists themselves, mathematical formulations still evoke an ideology of absolute rationality in social science and the public

sphere (c.f. Mumford, 1967). In this way, the official bureaucracies of social planning are invulnerable to any criticism that does not transcend quantitative reasoning, i.e., that does not reject the rhetorical appeal of mathematical formulations as absolute rationality.

Weber (1947:184-185) describes formal rationality as resting upon quantification and calculability. He views it as the mode of reasoning for modern science and industrial capitalism, especially in planning. Without it, a capitalist economy could not be rationally (efficiently) administered (1958:26-27). In addition to being indispensable, it is absolutely unavoidable as the fate of the West and will pervade every aspect of social life from the administration of state bureaucracies to everyday life (1946:228-229). His scenario closes with a whole society completely rationalized by capitalism and experiencing "the absolute and complete dependence of its existence, of the political, technical and economic conditions of its life on a specially trained organization of officials" (1958:16).

These ideas are very useful, but incomplete. Lukacs (1971:99) expands upon Weber (1946:228) to show that the members of the bureaucracy are themselves subject to rationalization and become dehumanized and mechanized as their service becomes a commodity form. Schroyer (1973:184) adds that what Weber calls formal rationalization is also the rising organic composition of capital, or in other words, increasing value production or growth of the capacity to create value. This is at the same time the growth of the capacity to extract surplus, i.e. material exploitation. Developing themes inaugurated by Kant, Marx, Weber and Lukacs, are the recent observations of Horkheimer (1947:8-9), Mills (1959: 165-176), and Kosik (1976:56-60) on the spread of irrationality simultaneous with and caused by advancing rationalization. Rather than making individual everyday life more understandable and easier to control, rationalization

makes social reality more opaque and less subject to control — irrational in these senses. Finally, buried within Schütz's social phenomenology is a theory of the invisibility of the expert. As experts become both more specialized and more important in the successful concentration of power in society (monopolization), their role as constructors of world views and as corroborators of taken for granted social knowledge becomes "nearly completely invisible" (Schütz, and Luckmann, 1973:315) and "entirely hidden in its anonymity" (Schütz, 1964:133). I think this is an important addition to Marx's concept of reification as the domination of living human potentiality by dead, objectified labor (Marx, 1969:17-18).

What these additions do to Weber's formulation is to turn it into a crisis theory. If this is a meaningful description of the tendencies associated with my subject, then the fundamental question to ask is what are the implications for our practical activity — as people trying to understand social reality (perhaps as critical social scientists), and as people who have everyday lives in that social reality?

There are partial answers to the first question. Investigations need to be conducted into the available methodologies of social research to see (1) if they are in fact able to do what they are conceived to do, (2) if there are unacknowledged limitations on the picture of social reality they create, and (3) if these limitations have political consequences, particularly if bureaucracies of official planning are empowered to make social policy on the basis of their picture of social reality. For example, if the view of social reality is a reified one, then their policy will presuppose reification, and the "guns and butter" they impose will correspond best to the reified needs of society, and, hence, be materially constitutive of further societal reification (which is then studied and — lo and behold — confirms the presupposed reified picture

of social reality).

My criticisms of quantitative reasoning, statistics, and social probability can be summed up as a critique of reification. The details of the criticism can be included in Lukacs' (1971:104, passim) more general critique of reification in science for (1) losing contact with the totality by becoming a "formally closed system of partial laws", (2) ignoring the world-manufacturing effect of its work ("ontological problems of its own sphere of influence"), and (3) losing history through a freezing of the given to produce apodictically certain facts.

Although it is necessary to develop alternative methodologies, the answer is not a categorical rejection of quantitative methods. Some of the techniques, like ordinal variables, probability sampling, probabilistic laws, and certain features of analysis, inference, and significance, must be cast on the junkheap forthwith. Other techniques are not inappropriate in that they can be useful as long as one does not pretend that they are capable of dealing with anything other than appearances. What this means is that reified substitutes for real knowledge (quantified observables) are important and necessary means of apprehending and describing indicators of phenomena which as yet cannot be accounted for in any superior manner, as long as the reified status of the observables is acknowledged.

This may seem like an overly simplistic solution but in practice it means an active struggle with the makers of social policy over the legitimacy of their research methods. This implies a struggle for social policy. This struggle (if the efforts of working peoples, the Third World, and all others disenfranchised from the decision-making that effects them are unsuccessful) is a struggle for the future. If unsuccessful, there may be no basis for social policy other than the truncated visions of the technocrat.

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CLAUS OFFE AND THE CAPITALIST

STATE: A CRITIQUE

Gordon Haas

Claus Offe's work may be regarded as a synthesis between certain Marxist concepts and systems theory and has broad implications for Marxist theories of the state. This paper will present and criticize Offe's ideas with special regard to the status of historical materialism in his work.

The historical materialist method (the analysis of production and appropriation of surplus) is not immune to improvement. However, the borrowing of concepts specific to historical materialism for use in a synthesis serves only to vitiate the method. This occurs because the differing background assumptions of the concepts utilized are contradictory and thus render the conclusions incomprehensible.

Offe's synthesis is an exemplar of the problems inherent in synthesizing approaches. Offe's work blends functionalism, Marxian political economy, and systems theory. The characteristic teleology of functional analysis is established on the basis of a 'Marxian' analysis of the commodity. We shall demonstrate that the concepts which Offe borrows from Marxism are not utilized in a valid fashion and that logical inconsistencies exist in his work even if the former is ignored.

In the first section of the paper, Offe's thesis is presented; the second section will provide a critical assessment. The paper concludes with an evaluation of Offe's contribution to Marxist research.

OFFE'S THEORY OF STATE AND SOCIETY

From the outset of his argument Offe dispenses with the Marxist

Revised version of a paper presented to the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, Saskatoon, June, 1979.

base/superstructure distinction and instead portrays capitalist society as three functionally related sub-systems: the economic, the political, and the normative. A sub-system is defined as a set of relationships and processes having a specific coherence based in an 'organizing principle' specific to the sub-system. The principle of the economic system is exchange, the political system is organized on the basis of power, while the normative system is neglected by Offe and, aside from an indication of its normative nature, does not have a principle defined for it (1976: 34,53).*

Offe argues that sub-system relations are concerned with the creation and maintenance of the conditions of economic dominance as the economic system is dominant (in that its stability is crucial to general system stability). For this reason, the non-economic systems are cast as 'flanking' systems as their operation must uphold the dominance of the exchange principle (1976: 34,35). Adding that a system is inherently unstable Offe is able to reduce the question of general system equilibrium to the inter-play of the three organizing principles. To be precise, however, system instability is not the result of the principles themselves but rather is due to the processes based on the principles. In this view, over-all system crisis consists of processes based in one principle coming to control processes organized by another principle.

Given that three unstable sub-systems are linked in an over-all unstable system we can see that Offe's intent is to investigate the nature and conditions of equilibrium for each sub-system as well as the general system. Through such an investigation an over-all social dynamic may be found. For each system Offe must ask: 'what is it about the processes within the system that produces instability, what

*Unless otherwise noted, all references are to Offe.

are the implications of this instability for the other systems, and how is stability regained in all systems?'. Simply stated then, Offe's object consists of the conditions of the maintenance of economic dominance. Note, however, that Offe reduces each system to an organizing principle; thus, maintenance of the economic system is seen by Offe as maintenance of the exchange principle. Further, as the organizing principle actually refers to processes, the conditions under investigation must also be processes. Thus, Offe's object is made up by the processes which maintain the dominance of the exchange principle in capitalist society.

Primary amongst these processes are those involving the non-economic systems. Offe conceptualizes the flanking relationships of these systems as being one of either positive or negative subordination. Positive subordination concerns:

...the adjustment of the content of those sub-systems not organized and formed by exchange to conform to economic processes...(1976: 35).

Negative subordination is a relationship where non-economic systems are related to the economic systems:

...in such a way that they are limited and are insulated from the economic system, without, however, being able to contribute to the content of its ability to function... (1976: 35).

Negative subordination is not the opposite of positive subordination and is best understood as a relation of exclusion.

Either type of subordination may be regarded as a system state, i.e. we may analyze inter-system relations and reach a conclusion concerning the type of subordination that describes the system. The dynamic which operates here is called 'system autonomy'. This is the '...partial emancipation...from the relationship of positive subordination'(1976: 48) and refers to the functionally necessary

'freedom of system' (my term) which is required for maintenance of economic dominance when the very maintenance is so problematic that processes subject to non-economic principles are required to uphold it. Autonomy is a system response to economic instability, its meaning embedded in the economic processes which it functions to maintain. Offe's understanding of capitalist society thus rests upon his analysis of the economic processes.

Offe argues that economic instability is a product of the developmental tendency of capital accumulation, a process which engenders '...the relative decline in the organizing potential of the wage-labour/capital pattern with regard to the total social labour power ...' (1976: 34). The characteristic instability of the economic system is that it makes its own dominance problematic. The decline of the exchange principle means that less labour is organized as a commodity whereas economic stability depends on labour in this form.

A four sector model of labour power utilization illustrates this conclusion (1976: 40). The monopoly, competitive, public, and residual (all other labour power) sectors represent proportions of labour organized according to specific principles. As commodity relationships exist only on the basis of exchange Offe argues that only in the monopoly sector is labour power organized solely on the basis of that principle. The dependency of the competitive sector (made up mainly of firms which are integrated with the monopoly sector via, for example, input or output dependency) on the monopoly sector means that the vast proportion of its labour power is organized on the basis of administered decisions rather than exchange. As the state sector cannot make reference to the market (as its services are not marketable as commodities) Offe concludes that labour power is here organized

on the basis of administered decisions while the dependence of the residual sector (eg. welfare, schools, etc.) on the state sector means that its proportion of labour power is also administered. Offe's point is that the expansion of the monopoly sector causes more and more labour to be administered. The systemic response is the autonomy of the political system.

However, because of its specific organizing principle (i.e. power) political intervention is, in itself, a cause of de-commodification as it requires utilizing labour on the basis of power rather than exchange. Due to the nature of its flanking relationship, Offe can argue that:

...what the state protects and sanctions is a set of rules and social relationships which are pre-supposed by the class rule of the capitalist class. The state does not defend the interests of one class, but the common interest of all members of a capitalist class society (1975a: 139).

The state then is defined not as a set of institutions but in terms of '...the way it is functionally related to and dependent upon the accumulation process' (1975a: 125). This functional relation excludes the state from direct participation in production processes but mandates the state to create the conditions of accumulation. As this functional relation is also an historical one Offe can cast the question of the rise of state intervention as one of 'modes' of intervention.

The modes of intervention are 'allocative' and 'productive' (1975a: 128). Allocative strategies are policy measures which stabilize accumulation by use of strictly political resources, i.e. the state allocates resources which are under its direct control (eg. education policy, trade tariffs, etc.). In pursuing productive strategies the state takes direct responsibility for the provision of inputs required by the accumulation process in the case where units of the economy will

not undertake production of the input because of low profit potential (1975a: 128-132).

The difference between the two modes of intervention is that, for productive intervention:

...what is needed in a given situation is not already at the disposal of the state but must be 'produced' by the state in the first place. The state-owned resources... are...merely the raw materials out of which certain outputs have to be manufactured according to decision rules ...that the state cannot take from its environment but has to generate for itself (1975a: 134).

But as the state can only operate as a political entity we can say that its economic intervention must meet conditions defined by the economic system. The state must, because it is not a capitalist enterprise, direct its economic related activities on the basis of a defined 'general capitalist interest'. The content of this definition is the forum of state/capitals conflict.

The distillation of a general capitalist interest from the narrow interests of individual capital units is seen as a question of policy determination. The concept of 'system selectivity' allows Offe to conceptualize the nature of the capitalist state as a question of policy formation. 'Selectivity' refers to a set of 'filtering mechanisms' which, in their functioning, result in '...the systematic restriction of the scope of possibility...' of the policy process (1974: 37). Offe argues that the selectivity of the state structure is such that only interests which correspond to the state-defined 'general interest' are allowed representation (1974: 34). As a corollary of this, anti-capitalist interests are denied articulation (1974: 38). Capitalist interest is guaranteed by the conditions of interest representation. To be articulated in the political arena, a group 'need' must meet two conditions: it must be capable of conflict (i.e. it must

have a collective ability for refusal to perform), and it must also be capable of being organized. The ultimate effect is that groups with access to large amounts of resources have a better chance of gaining interest representation (1972: 85-87). Thus:

...the pluralistic system of organized interests excludes ...all articulation of demands which are general in nature and not associated with any status group; that are incapable on conflict because they have no functional significance for the utilization of labour power, and that represent utopian projections beyond the historically specific system. (1972: 89).

Offe's intent is to define the nature of the class state, not of the state ruling in response to external demands, and it is argued that such a difference may be explored in the selectivity which results in policy generation. This is why the concept of selectivity has the status of a set of hypotheses for Offe. Investigation of these hypotheses is, however, problematic because '...state power in capitalist industrial societies is the method of class rule which does not disclose its identity as such' (1974: 46); thus, concealment of the state's relation to the accumulation process is seen as one of the pre-conditions of the capitalist state. This 'concealment' is revealed only in 'crisis' situations, i.e. in those situations where the state acts directly and incontrovertibly as a class state.

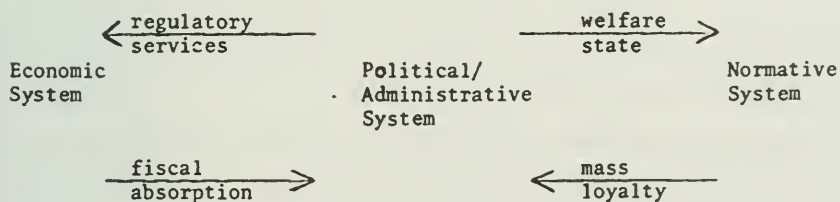
Offe's functional definition of the state illustrates this. As the state has the role of maintaining both the legitimacy of the overall system¹ and directing the economy Offe argues that these two roles are contradictory in terms of their effects on system stability. While 'direction' is subject to external demands (demands from individual capitals, sectors of capital, and other pressure groups), the attainment of legitimacy involves the fulfilling of specific demands (to a greater or lesser extent), i.e. policies are created which do not

satisfy everyone. Thus, the contradiction is that meeting demands will cause groups whose demands are not met to withhold legitimacy (1973: 245-248). The state's problem is balancing these two roles.

The conditions of the balance are:

...achieved if (a) the acceptance of legitimating rules of democratic and constitutional regimes is reinforced by the material outcomes of governmental policies and measures, and (b) if these measures and policies are 'efficient' in the only way a capitalist state can be efficient, namely in succeeding to provide, to restore, and to maintain commodity relations for all citizens and for the totality of their needs (1973: 252).

Thus, legitimacy is tied to the attainment of economic stability. Further, legitimacy is now a function of the commodity form as the method by which the state can gain legitimacy is dictated by the state's relation to economic processes. We can now appreciate the logic behind Offe's statement that: 'The commodity form is the general point of equilibrium for the capitalist state'. (1975a: 140) We are also in a position to appreciate Offe's ideas regarding subordination, system autonomy, and the intrusion of foreign organizing principles. Because of its functional role the state faces what Offe calls a 'crisis of crises management'. Offe presents an illustrative diagram:



(1976: 52)²

The problems which the state must 'balance' are 1) maintaining the balance of input/output within each separate system, and 2) maintaining the balance of the system as a whole (1976: 53).

Offe's principal argument is that as the state is the central actor in society the social bases of conflict are restructured because of the intrusion of the political organizing principle into the economic sphere. The basic conflicts are now political rather than economic in nature. This may be seen in the dramatic effects of political intrusion on class relationships:

As politically manipulable variables now intervene extensively between labour and income, and between the latter and the concrete structures of life chances, the new forms of social inequality are no longer directly reducible to economically defined class relationships which they are assumed to reflect (1972: 95).

Thus, the real issues of conflict in capitalist society are now derived from the mechanisms of political intervention which generate a '...horizontal system of disparities between vital areas...' (1972: 96). Vital areas are defined as such by virtue of their functional relevance for the accumulation process. In late capitalist societies then, a dominance of functions now exists rather than class dominance, and conflict now occurs between groups having differing degrees of 'functional relevance' and not differing relations to the means of production. Offe argues that it is this conflict which is the driving force of social change (1972: 98,101) as the 'horizontal privilege distribution' is not necessarily related to class, even if the effects of both class and functional privilege inequality tend to accumulate '...on the lower levels of the income scale' (1972: 102).

Offe concludes that the final outcome of the functionally required state intervention is the autonomy of the political system from a relation of subordination. The political system has come to dominate the economic system. Thus:

The decisions and actions which are the output of the labour of the civil service and other categories of employees are no longer deducible from criteria of their relevance for

capital accumulation, but, on the contrary, themselves determine exchange relations between commodities (1973: 114).

Due to the dominance of political control, the need for legitimacy is amplified. That is, not only must the political system as such be legitimated but also the intrusion of the political into the economic system must be legitimated. Capitalist domination is now so bound with the political system that only the legitimacy of the political system makes the domination possible (1973: 74). Offe's general thesis of crisis in capitalist society is that:

...the increasing utilization of the regulatory medium of state power - a medium external to the market - leads, cumulatively, to the production of breaches that enable intrusions into the (economic) system by non-capitalist structures; the closing of these breaches through mechanisms of 'negative subordination' consequently becomes the main problem of late capitalist social systems (1976: 47).

The basic problem in resolving this crisis is that its resolution rests on the action of the system (the political) which is responsible for the crisis.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Our critique will first address Offe's characterization of crisis in capitalist society³; then, having demonstrated the shortcomings of his approach to the problem, we shall show that Offe's economic analysis is seriously flawed by an inadequate understanding of the commodity. We will conclude with a brief discussion of legitimacy and of the political system.

That the concept of the commodity is crucial to Offe's analysis is proven by (a) the reduction of system stability to economic stability and (b) the reduction of the economic system to the exchange principle, where the 'commodity form' is taken as the indicator of the proper

functioning of the principle.

We shall now turn to Offe's concept of the totality. As we have seen, the totality is conceived as a system composed of three functionally related sub-systems. Here we can ask of Offe what Laclau asks of Althusser: 'Why only three? What has been the method of their deduction? Does there exist any logical link between them?' (Laclau, 1975: 104). Offe's answer is 'silence to the first two and functional to the third'. Offe does not present any reasons as to why there are three systems or why it is these three particular systems.

We argue here that the three systems are identified as such as a function of Offe's over-riding concern with system crisis. The concept of crisis is the first point of analysis. As Offe states:

...one conceptualizes crises not at the level of events but rather at the super-ordinate level of mechanisms that generate events (1976: 32).

Offe points out that '...such a definition predisposes one to favour a processual concept of crisis...' as '...crises would be processes which violate the "grammar" of social processes' (1976: 32). The view of crisis as a super-ordinate mechanism is compatible with Offe's reduction of all systems to organizing principles; in this usage, crisis becomes the failure of an organizing principle. The concept of crisis is therefore contained within the concept of organizing principle because the principle involves the crisis-prone processes. As the processes must follow the pre-defined functional imperative of economic stability Offe has only to define those processes which are of functional importance to the economic system and which are capable of being described as based in an organizing principle. If such a principle can be formulated then, ipso facto, crisis pertains within the processes referred to by the principle. As we can see however, Offe is able to do

this only for two systems.

There are implications here for Offe's theory of the state. A tenet of the systems theory employed by Offe is that if crisis exists then a 'crisis-resolving mechanism' must also exist. In Offe's work, this mechanism is found in the state. Such a view of the state dovetails with a functional definition of the state such as the one used by Offe.

Referring now to the organizing principles we argue that while Offe holds that processes are of basic importance in his formulation, the 'logic of crisis' exists only at the level of the principles. However, the derivation of a principle involves not an abstraction of system content (i.e. the processes) but, rather, a reduction of the content to a statement of form. This reduction is severe enough to expel content; for instance, the reduction of the economic system to the principle of exchange means that Offe cannot approach the specificity of capitalism as exchange characterizes any economic system. The reduction is, however, functional for Offe's analysis as it facilitates the extension of the idea of crisis to the functional relations between sub-systems.

Another problem connected to the functional relations of the systems is that in a formal sense either of the two flanking systems can achieve autonomy and so come to dominate the economic system. But the absence of a defined principle of the normative system means that Offe cannot account for the hypothetical case of normative system autonomy. Offe would argue that the issue here is one of substantive content, the point being that hypothetical problems are best left as such. We agree but Offe cannot argue 'content' as a resolution because the problem actually exists in the pre-conditions of his argument, in

the reduction to the organizing principle that facilitates the concept of crisis.

The point here is that Offe's model of capitalist society is based on reductions of content. The reductions lend coherence to the theory but Offe is unable to account for the potential relationships which could pertain in the model. If we ask why these potential relationships are not explored the answer will also tell us why the political system has the role described by Offe. However, the only answer that Offe provides rests upon the assumption of functional necessity and thus the analysis of system relations becomes teleological.

Turning now to the specific analysis of the economic system we recall that a basic system problem is the tendency for less and less social labour to be organized in the commodity form (where this form is the 'natural' basis of the exchange principle). Offe argues that:

The pre-requisite for the conversion of ever larger quantities of labour power into the commodity form inherent to the wage-labour relation was, from the emergence of capitalist society, the organization of labour power within a non-commodity form, that is, the existence of the bureaucratic worker (1973: 109).

This formulation clearly states the relationship of functional necessity between the political and economic systems. Offe holds that capital accumulation is functionally dependent on the state in that the state has the role of '...creating the conditions under which values can function as commodities' (1975: 143). Offe's view of the developmental processes of late capitalist societies is that within them '...values cease to operate in the commodity form' (1975: 141). In these societies, the state (upon which the existence of the commodity form is dependent) is not a part of the economic system as it is organized on the basis of a principle foreign to exchange. By virtue of this Offe concludes that labour performed 'in' the state is not of the commodity form.

In the above formulation, 'non-commodity' labour is a form of labour which is, in some way, not determined by the exchange principle. A closer examination of the 'commodity form of labour' is required here. Offe holds that 'commodified' labour is only that labour which is directly productive of surplus value for capital accumulation, i.e. only labour organized on the basis of the exchange principle exists as a commodity (1973: 109). Thus, as the state does not accumulate surplus-value its 'workers' must not exist in the commodity form.

We have located the problem. Offe has confused the commodity with productive labour. As Laclau points out, the commodity and productive labour (the latter being an aspect of the labour process) are two different sets of abstract conditions of the theory of the capitalist mode of production, and are entirely different theoretical and empirical categories (1975: 106).

Offe says of state labour power:

Such labour is not abstract, it is not a commodity and produces no commodities. The social utilization of this kind of labour is determined by its concrete results; it is deployed with regard to its use-value and to the use-value of its performance and not, as is the case of abstract labour, with regard to its exchange value, where use-value is not the primary factor but only a necessary by-product (1973: 109).

Here the use-value and the exchange-value of labour as the producer of commodities (which have both use and exchange value) is confused with the use-value and exchange-value of a commodity in itself. Offe has totally misunderstood capitalist production. Just because labour power is not productive of surplus value does not imply that such labour power does not exist in the commodity form. The 'productivity' of labour is a matter of '...the definite social form, the social relations of production, within which the labour is realized' (Marx, 1963: 157). The productivity of labour (that is, productive labour) cannot be

identified with the existence of labour power as a commodity because labour power in the capitalist mode of production is a commodity by virtue of the value of labour being a function of socially necessary labour time.

Offe has missed the crucial role of the relations of production which serve to constitute labour as productive or unproductive of surplus value. We may see this as an effect of the reduction of the economic system, as this reduction dispenses with the concept of relations of production upon which the concept of productive labour rests. Therefore, to say 'commodity form of value' and apply the term to the labour force is to state a redundancy and then to look for precise differentiations within it. The real question is (as we shall see) one concerning productive labour, but Offe's invalid equation of the commodity and productive labour prevents him from seeing this, as he cannot differentiate between the two.

Returning now to Offe's argument regarding system relations, we see that he cannot proceed from an analysis of production as his approach to the economic system expunges production and replaces it with a flawed analysis of the commodity, an analysis which is then incorporated into the functional logic of system relations. We can see the pernicious effects of Offe's misunderstanding of the commodity in his model. In Offe's usage, for labour to be a commodity it must (a) be directly productive of surplus-value and (b) have its value determined solely on the basis of exchange. This double definition makes it easy to discover a decline in the organizing potential of the exchange principle as any indication that labour value is determined by non-economic forces is sufficient to disqualify that labour from existence as a commodity.

Labour which is organized through the exchange principle is characterized by the fact that:

...all coercion to which labour power is subjected emanates from an organization with which it is simultaneously linked through the relationship of exchange...(1976: 41).

To say 'exchange relationships' means that '...all determinants of the individual's chances in life...' are based in exchange (1976: 40).

As Offe says:

...labour power is here incorporated into a relationship of coercion (namely the structure of domination of the large scale industrial establishment) that is in all aspects the object of the exchange relationship...Here labour power is in all its aspects a 'commodity' - and not the object of administrative coercion (1976: 40-41; Offe's emphasis).

As Offe's argument is that the amount of labour existing in such a relationship tends to decline, a direct implication is that the amount of labour given over to the production of surplus value is declining, the corollary being that the amount of labour which drains surplus value grows. Clearly then, Offe points to the need of late capitalist societies to increase the amount of surplus value and this is the real issue. Offe's concern, because of his usage of the concepts of labour power and the commodity can only approach the question of how many people are producing surplus value. This involves an under-utilization (if not misunderstanding) of the concept of surplus value.

Offe's idiosyncratic understanding of labour power as a commodity makes it easy for him to argue its decline when that understanding is conjoined to the argument that political intervention represents 'administrative coercion' and therefore the 'de-commodification' of labour. This coercion refers to the effects of state intervention and alters exchange relationships in that competition is no longer the basis of determination of exchange. Thus, in Offe's view, the material conditions of exchange are no longer directly linked to exchange. But here Offe demonstrates his misunderstanding of the determination

of labour value.

Offe does not imply that exchange relationships no longer obtain; he has correctly identified some of the dynamics of the determination of exchange in late capitalist societies. If we see, following Marx, that all labour power is a commodity and that Offe is actually dealing with the problem of productive and unproductive labour, then we can see the 'administered coercion' does not alter the nature of value determination. Offe, however, thinks that the return to labour is strictly an economic process, hence, the importance of establishing exchange in his analysis. We may conclude that Offe utilizes a neo-classical meaning of the economic system. Leaving aside the intricacies of Marxist economics, we see that the value of labour power is the result of the social process of class struggle, and this process has never been concerned solely with exchange as it is a social as well as an economic process. This calls into question Offe's understanding of class and transformation of class struggle. Offe states:

Because the lines of conflict are no longer drawn between classes but between vital areas affecting the same individuals, disjunctions in living standards are no longer a fit basis for the organization of conflicts of broad social relevance (1973: 103).

Given our demonstration that Offe's theory points to the continued importance of the pool of surplus value and that (from Marxist theory) surplus depends on productivity, we suggest that Offe's contention is misinformed. The surplus value pool is drained through strictly economic strategies on the part of trade unions. The immediate object of such a strategy is the living standard.

As well, in Offe's argument, the level of labour process (labour power as a 'commodity') and the level of state/economy relations are mixed. If we are to follow Offe's logic to its conclusion then we must say, by virtue of the functional definition of the state, all capitalism

is 'de-commodified'. Obviously we have the problem of drawing boundaries here. Our point is that the simplicity of the reductions employed by Offe in order to establish his analysis make the drawing of such boundaries intensely problematic. Even if we accept the possibility of boundaries, certain problems still pertain. For example, a monopoly sector firm may exist by virtue of government contracts. Now while the exchange relation may exist within the firm, is this existence not the product of an administrative coercion? Further, the boundaries make it impossible to analyse the social determination of labour value; thus even if Offe's political economy refers to new forms of the determination of the value of socially necessary labour, he cannot elaborate on these forms because of his concern with the interaction of principles.

As mentioned previously, Offe sees the attainment of legitimacy (as a minimum of mass loyalty) as the basic problem facing the capitalist state. As our previous remarks show, Offe's analysis does not always deal with what he thinks it does and this is the case for legitimacy.

Offe holds that legitimization problems arise as a function of state intervention (1975c: 107). As intervention causes the ideology of equivalent exchange to decline (the fetishism of commodities is broken and the new social relations are easily comprehended), a new basis of integration is required to legitimate the intervention. As shown, because of the centrality of the state in the argument, Offe reduces legitimacy to the provision of material goods and so turns his theory into one concerned with economic stability--given stability, the legitimacy will, somehow, follow naturally. In this sense, Offe treats legitimacy in a 'residual' fashion. Thus, instead of being the crucial problem we see instead that when Offe's economic analysis is combined with his 'basic material level' approach to legitimacy, the problem of legitimacy actually disappears from Offe's work. Contrary to his own statement, the real problem is one of

economic stability.

In any case, the concept of legitimacy as such is problematical. Offe's normative system does not seem to be an active process in the same way that the economic and political processes are.

Additionally, given Offe's argument about legitimacy and his argument that crisis is seen only in open conflict we can say, following Giddens' critique of functionalism (1976), that the very operation of the social system indicates that the minimum level of legitimacy is met. Thus, the concept and the attainment of the empirical state to which legitimacy refers, is unimportant.

Even if one accepts Offe's analysis to this point, some further problems exist. For example, like the analysis of the economic system, Offe's treatment of the political system involves sweeping simplifications.

Proceeding from his definition of systems and principles, we can ask Offe to identify processes within the political system which produce strictly political instability. However, aside from a discussion of policy determination we are not informed as to such processes and must be satisfied with an indication of externally caused political instability (i.e. the instability of the economic system to which the policies are a reaction). In this case, however, apart from being told of the reaction of the political as a system we are, again, not given clarification as to the internal determination of this reaction. Symptomatic of this denial of internal processes is the concept of the state defining a general capitalist interest. We are not told how this comes about and are given only the clue of policy formulation. We suggest that while the concept of selectivity seems fruitful, Offe has presented a view of the state which takes the apparent unity as a homogeneity. By this we mean that the processes which operate so as to create, in their apparent unity, the state as such (or in a specific sense, a general capitalist interest)

may be sources of conflict (instability?) internal to the state. But because Offe begins his analysis with the 'apparent unity' he cannot approach the internal workings and this detracts from his work.

CONCLUSION

Our critique has avoided the supposition that Offe is a firmly entrenched member of the critical school. An argument of this nature implies the existence of a clearly defined discourse known as 'critical theory', whereas at most we can identify a 'critical tradition' and see Offe's work as a part of this tradition.

The contemporary fount of the critical tradition is, of course, Habermas. But our interest here is to analyse the work of Offe in and of itself and not to 'locate' Offe in relation to Habermas. A comparison of the two theorists would have turned a critique of Offe into an enumeration of the similarities and differences with Habermas. At most we will express our agreement with Woodiwiss that Habermas' theory of the state (or rather, aspects of Habermas' theory of politics) clearly draws upon concepts developed by Offe (Woodiwiss 1978: 175).

Nonetheless, a summary of the critical tradition sensitizes us to Offe's concerns.

Generally, critical theory may be seen as a response to the classical Marxist emphasis on production at the expense (so perceived) of an analysis of the superstructure. It is argued that historical materialism must be reformulated in order that, for example, political and cultural phenomena may be accommodated.

One fashion of establishing this accommodation involves the claim that the transition of capitalism from a competitive to monopoly form has seen the collapse of base and superstructure. In this view, the production process is no longer the locus of the class struggle. The argument is that the class struggle has expanded to encompass all of society.

Offe's analysis is within this tradition. His object is the change wrought by state intervention into the accumulation process. We may thus see Offe as exploring the relations of a totality where the classic base/superstructure distinction does not pertain.

Offe may thus be seen as presenting a theory of post-capitalist society (this being quite apropos to his critical school heritage). Offe's conclusions are not, however, linked to his theoretical approach. Offe is free to argue that the attainment of a state of negative subordination is the basic problem facing capitalist society but it can be just as easily argued that the system autonomy which Offe identifies means that we are beyond capitalist society. If this is so then Offe's project of identifying the true class state is virtually meaningless. The issue hangs on the meaning and direction of 'system autonomy'. It is entirely plausible to think that a state of system autonomy will operate in a fashion which actually redefines functional imperatives. Offe's whole analysis points in this direction but he is prevented from pursuing this argument because his assumption of the nature of economic dominance forces him to view capitalist society as obeying only a particular matrix of functional relations.

The problem is twofold. Offe's analysis is both ahistorical and abstract; his functional approach can be applied to the Soviet Union as easily as it is to any capitalist social formation. This is to say that Offe's statement of functional relations cannot specifically identify capitalist society. In addition the analysis of capitalism is, as demonstrated, confused and this makes Offe's treatment of the outcome of functional relations within capitalist society problematic as a basis of research.

We conclude with the observation that Offe may be seen as presenting an unsophisticated economic reductionism. Offe's political economy is at

once simplistic and confused; the integration of historical materialism and systems theory fails miserably because Offe's systemic approach to the economy involves stripping the concept of relations of production from the economic.

The systems approach requires that a system be seen as somehow insulated from its environment, but the concept of relations of production (which gives coherence to historical materialism) is 'inter-systemic' and cannot, strictly speaking, be used in a systems approach. The use of Marx's categories of political economy in conjunction with a systems approach requires that one or the other be massively simplified. In Offe's case, Marx is simplified to the point where errors are made which could have been avoided had Offe used the concept of relations of production.

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NOTES

- 1) Legitimacy is a source of political power; its nature is one of a minimum loyalty engendered through the normative system (1975a: 126).
- 2) The rather obvious resemblance to Parsons is noteworthy but will not be pursued. Our interest in Offe's ideas about functional relations lies in his economic reductionism.
- 3) The basis of critique in this section will be Laclau's contention that:
 - A theory is false only to the extent that it is internally inconsistent, i.e. if in the process of construction of its concepts it has entered into contradiction with its postulates. (Laclau, 1975: 94)

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THE MYTH OF AUTONOMY IN FAMILY FARM PRODUCTION

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Agricultural practice on family farms throughout Ontario history provides an example of independent commodity production. According to this description, farm producers own, operate and control the means of production (Hedley, 1976:415; Johnson, 1979:91). The autonomy of farm producers is derived from their ability to determine the conditions of production, for example, the type and quantity of commodity produced and application of technological innovation. The capacity of producers to influence the conditions of the sale and purchase of agricultural goods significantly influences the degree of productive autonomy characteristic of farming. In a capitalist society where private ownership prevails, and the autonomy of owners is seen as providing scope for the expansion of production and innovation, the real relation between ownership and autonomy must be made explicit. It will be argued that the real relationship between ownership and autonomy in farm practice is an historical relationship which is determined and conditioned by: 1. the transformation of the mode of production in society, 2. the transformation of the relations of production immediate to farming, 3. the role of the state in these transformations. Through the examination of these historical processes it appears that the autonomy of small farm producers at present is a myth. Farm production seems to be increasingly characterized not by autonomy but by dependency; dependency among members of farm families and of small farmers on the state.

The transformation of the mode of production may be more precisely described as the process by which a particular mode of production emerges as dominant in a society. In Ontario history, the most significant transformation in this regard is the emergence of the

* Revised version of a paper presented to the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, Saskatoon, June, 1979.

capitalist mode of production. The rise of capitalism has two effects: capitalist relations may replace previously existing relations of production, or previously existing relations of production may be retained but in a new relation to the capitalist market. In Ontario farm history both effects can be observed. At present, in Ontario, there is evidence that the production of agricultural commodities is increasingly organized by capitalist relations (Warnock:123; Johnson, 1979:94). The replacement of the family farm by corporate (capitalist) farming occurs after the incorporation of family farm production into the capitalist market. In fact, it is incorporation of the family farm into capitalist market relations which results in the eventual elimination of increasing numbers of small farms. The process by which family farm production is transformed by the emergence of capitalism is the context for the analysis of the relation between ownership and autonomy.

H. Saffioti, describing the emergence to dominance of the capitalist mode of production, states:

A mode of production is dominant insofar as it interferes vertically in other modes of production thus provoking the latter's loss of autonomy and redefining their specific activities ... Hence they are only able to survive thanks to a process of redefinition governed by the capitalist mode of production ... what remains are precapitalist work relations which now have new connotations.

(1977:30)

Vertical interference by the capitalist mode of production describes the process which has transformed independent commodity production in agriculture. The family farm persists but under conditions substantially altered by the capitalist market. Competitive conditions for marketing agricultural produce confront the farmer as pressure for specialization, with consequent risks of overproduction, and loss in real income in addition to the natural/biological risks of agricultural production

(Smith, 1978:19-23; Mitchell, 1975:18-21; Hedley, 1976:417). What is clearly suggested by the vertical interference of capitalism is the possibility of retaining individual ownership while experiencing significant alteration in other conditions of production. The alteration of market conditions and pressure for specialization with its concomitant risks, result in risk minimizing practices which may in themselves limit productivity (Hedley, 1976:418). The double bind that emerges with transformed productive conditions limits the autonomy of the farmer in terms of the type and quantity of goods produced, the scale of operation and the necessity of adopting technological innovations in order to remain competitive.

Vertical interference of the capitalist mode of production limits autonomy further in the sphere of ownership of the means of production. The necessity of greater investment in land and machinery in order to maintain competitive levels of production leads to ever increasing dependence on credit and corporate controlled production and marketing of farm machinery, fertilizer and fuel. That is, there emerges a dependence of the farmer on capitalist relations for the necessities of productive consumption. The increasing determination by capitalist market relations of not only the type and quantity of product but also the costs of production continually narrows the sphere of autonomy of agricultural producers.

Is the integration of independent commodity production in agriculture into capitalist market relations simply a precursor to the eventual demise of all "family farm" production? Evidence of the increasing corporatization of agriculture and the decrease in small farms have led some to conclude that this is the case (Johnson, 1979:98). There are, however, factors and conditions which mediate the tendency to corporatization and the erosion of small farm production.

It appears that certain types of agricultural production (e.g. fruit, tobacco) are particularly amenable to organization on capitalist lines, whereas other sectors retain more traditional forms of productive organization. Region also appears to be a mediating factor in the corporatization process. The comparison of the rate of corporatization of agriculture in Ontario and Quebec reveals that Quebec agricultural practice may be more resistant to change (Johnson, 1979:98). Protective legislation and tax concessions which benefit individual farmers may be understood as legitimating activities of the state which affect the corporatization process. To the extent that tradition, region and ideology may influence the rate of corporatization of agriculture, their relationship to the transformation of the mode of production needs clarification.

Saffioti, in her analysis of the process of vertical interference with precapitalist forms of productive organization by the capitalist mode of production, postulates that this process has the effect of retaining only the economic aspect of precapitalist work relations and eliminating their ideological aspect, which it replaces with bourgeois ideology (Saffioti:30). Such a hypothesized replacement of one ideology with another does not appear to adequately reflect the way in which world views change. While it seems likely that new productive relations generate new ideological counterparts, some aspects of traditional world views persist and continue to be reproduced. If ideas are viewed as singularly determined by productive relations, then the transformation of productive relations ought to lead directly to the transformation of ideas. However, this appears not necessarily to be the case. In the preceding discussion it was suggested that the conditions of farming have been significantly transformed such that the margin of autonomy of the small producer is increasingly reduced. In spite of the altered

conditions of production, autonomy persists ideologically as the counterpart of private ownership. Belief in the autonomy of individual owners may persist as a result of the reluctance of individuals to alter their beliefs in accordance with changes in the world. Alternately, this belief may be reproduced ideologically and serve to justify practices related to capitalist expansion. (Owners of capitalist enterprises may have considerable autonomy). Ideological reproduction of the relation of ownership to autonomy in the context of capitalist development mystifies the real effects of that development for small agricultural producers. The latter explanation can be examined by reference to the degree of autonomy which existed in family farming historically.

The myth of autonomy in agricultural production has its historical origins in the notion of the self sufficient agriculture of pioneer families. V. Fowke has argued that self sufficiency is itself a myth "which is an integral part of Canadian folklore" (Fowke, 1962:23). Far from self sufficiency, pioneer agriculture was characterized by the need for capital as a precondition for settlement, barter and the extension of credit as a means to provide for domestic and productive consumption, and the need for markets for surplus products (Fowke, 1962). Settlement of the Canadian frontier was not the culmination of the pioneering dream of daring individuals. It was rather, a means to escape industrial labour, famine and political revolution (Loyalists) and for some, the chance to acquire greater wealth and position.

Ontario pioneer settlements were not located by chance but were a product of British interest in providing defense for trade routes and for the provisioning of military personnel and traders (Fowke, 1946:118). From the outset, it became apparent that settlement provided an excellent investment opportunity, not through agricultural production but in the movement of settlers. "There were profitable investment opportunities

associated with the original transfer and installation of prospective farm populations" (Fowke, 1946:118). This relation is further evidenced by the responsibility of the Bureau of Agriculture established in 1852, for immigration policy (Fowke, 1946:121). The combination of the dependence of farmers on market conditions (capital, barter, credit) and on the state for acquiring land is evidence of the interconnectedness of agricultural production with political and economic interests from its inception. While this interconnectedness does not necessarily imply a lack of autonomy, it does create a basis from which historical relations of dependence may be seen to emerge. V. Fowke, in identifying the historical pattern in Canadian agricultural policy states:

The clearest and most significant uniformity regarding Canadian agriculture for more than three hundred years has been its deliberate and consistent use as a basis for economic and political empire.

(1978:3)

While economic and political interests are significant in the determination of agricultural settlement, it would appear that at least for a time, a period of relative autonomy of agricultural producers could be said to have existed. This is in part due to periods of favourable market conditions and minimally due to the protective actions of the state (Jones:196, 307). In addition, it could be argued that productive relations organized on the basis of collective labours of family members contributed to the possibility of a relative degree of autonomy in agricultural production.

The family constitutes a basis for production from which a considerable number of benefits can be derived. The division of labour among family members facilitated the diversification of production which contributed both to domestic consumption and to the production of commodities. The work of women, often associated with production closer

to the home, could be drawn upon at times when additional labour was required in the fields. The contribution of children to agricultural production beginning at an early age provided additional necessary labour (Johnson, 1974:17). When inadequate resources were available for establishing a farm, family members worked for wages before or during the early years of settlement (Fowke, 1962:32-33). The intense labour required and the need for financial resources in agriculture prior to 1850 necessitated a co-operative productive unit like the family for survival (Johnson, 1974:15-22). However, these conditions would change.

The introduction of mass education and use of technology in agricultural production were significant in the change in participation of family members (Johnson, 1974:23). With increasing specialization and transformation of productive relations, women (and children) became increasingly separated from the production of commodities. This separation was enhanced ideologically by the emergent role of 'chatelaine', the wife of the 'better class' of entrepreneur. The agricultural practice of the wealthiest settlers was thus set up as the model for all agricultural practice. This point is illustrated by the tendency for the wealthiest settlers to be the organizers of agricultural societies and the initiators of technological innovation (Jones:157, 174). Similarly, the separation of the "chatelaine" from the production of commodities may have exerted ideological pre-eminence over relations of interdependence of family members which characterized most farming.

At this point I would like to note that I am somewhat skeptical about historical accounts of the time and degree of separation of women from agricultural commodity production. It is unclear whether the productive relations described are those of the majority of farmers or of "ideal" (affluent) farmers. For the moment, this question must be

suspended pending further investigation. What is clear however, is that while there may be evidence of the decreasing role of women in commodity production (Hedley, 1977:6; Johnson, 1974:24) the work of women in creating conditions for continued commodity production is significant. Women have often taken on tasks of bookkeeping and business management (Kohl, 1978:52). Women's role in reproduction and domestic work also provides the basis for long and short run production of labour power required by the enterprise. Further, the efforts of the family, particularly of women, toward decreasing consumption of commodities and the production of use value offers a measure of protection in "lean" times.

More relevant in recent times would be the contribution by family members of wages. As input of capital comes to have ever increasing importance, family members more frequently have off-farm employment. It may be argued that the shift from interdependence of family members in agricultural labour to dependence on family members for wage inputs is a qualitative change. Analysis of the significance of wage inputs to the persistence of many family farm operations in Ontario warrants further investigation and evidence.

In all of the above ways, the productive interdependence of family members has contributed greatly to creating conditions of flexibility in an enterprise vulnerable to "Acts of God", of the market and of the state. This flexibility could be said to account for the relative degree of autonomy differentially experienced by farm producers historically.

As is implicit in the foregoing discussion, the capacity of internal relations of family farm production to offer protection from transformed market conditions is limited. M. Hedley states, "The significance of the involvement of domestic producers in commodity production is that reproduction of the mode of production is unavoidably

dependent on the process of exchange" (Hedley, 1977:4). This dependency is at present mediated by the state through agricultural policy, trade policy, supervision of marketing boards, and tax, succession and zoning laws, to name a few examples. Fowkes' thesis of the dependence of farm producers on dominant economic and political interests, extended into the present, suggests there is little basis for believing that small producers will, in the long run, be offered any measure of protection. This skepticism is well founded, as an examination of the Report of the Task Force on Agriculture, (1967) reveals.

The recommendations of this report include:

1. Reduction of the number of farms with about 2/3 of farm families removed.
2. Increase in farm size.
3. Greater rationalization of farming with an increase in "backward, forward, horizontal integration" with agricultural business interests.
4. "a clearcut separation of welfare and commercial farm policy".

(Summarized from Warnock, 1971:126)
- my emphasis

The government disowned this report without providing a substitute policy (Cayley, 1973:8). However, a detailed analysis of the historical conditions which give rise to recommendations of this sort is required. Points like the emergence of an overlap in "welfare and commercial policy" obviously need to be examined. These recommendations are indicative of the extensive involvement of the state in the reproduction and transformation of agricultural production and certainly suggest the emergence of dependency and the almost complete erosion of the autonomy of small producers.

Some further, and perhaps less obvious, characteristics of the role of the state may be suggested. If in fact an appropriation of ideologies of pre-capitalist modes of production occurs, what is the concrete

character of that appropriation? One example would be the continued affirmation of individual patriarchal ownership (see Hedley, 1977:7). This clearly denies the history of productive interdependence of family members in favour of a definition which reproduces an individualistic ideology and the legal subordination of women. At the interpersonal level, this relation is reproduced in the reluctance of Federal and Provincial bureaucratic agents to deal with farmers' wives in business matters (Kohl, 1978:51). Kohl states: "The formal definition of the male role as the official 'producer' in North American society is based on and reinforced by the embodiment of that status in Law" (1978:51).

In marketing, the state has played a primary mediating role in the establishment and control of production quotas through marketing boards. The protection offered to farmers through these agencies is useful only insofar as increases in productivity and conditions of the purchase of quota facilitate the expansion necessary for survival. This places the small producers in an increasingly vulnerable position (Cayley, 1973:5).

It appears that autonomy in agricultural production has been progressively eroded by the transformation of market conditions. The internal relations of production of the family farm offer a limited amount of protection from these tendencies. The state, while periodically offering limited protection to individual producers, ultimately functions to facilitate that development and expansion of capitalist interests. In spite of these developmental tendencies, the ideology of autonomy derived from private ownership of the means of production persists and is reproduced. In terms of highly visible cultural tendencies, the "back to nature" movement and the purchase of hobby farms by members of high income groups reaffirm the myth of autonomy.

Loss of ownership (the final loss of autonomy) is explained in terms of the "inefficiency" of producers. This explanation serves to

transpose a characteristic defined by the mode of production to a statement of the inadequacy of an individual producer. As long as the loss of autonomy of individual producers can be explained in terms of their individual shortcomings, changes at the level of the social organization of production remain unexamined.

The framework for analysis outlined in the preceding discussion yields several areas requiring further investigation:

1. The persistence of farm based independent commodity production in certain sectors delimited by type of production, geography and culture needs to be examined. To what extent does independent commodity production in these sectors serve the interests of capitalist expansion? That is, to what extent are the risks borne by the producers such that corporatization of that sector would be a poor investment? A further question raised is the extent that corporatization of agriculture is impeded by traditional practices and by cultural considerations. Research into these questions would contribute greatly to an understanding of the transformation of farming which occurs with the emergence of capitalism in Ontario.

2. The relations of production on the family farm, I have argued, offer certain limited protection to the enterprise by providing some flexibility. In the present day, the most significant contribution of family members residing on small farms may be the income they derive from other sources. A work-farm pattern is emerging in Canadian agriculture. In Ontario, it would be worthwhile to look at the wage contributions of farm wives as I suspect they may be significant for the persistence of many small farm operations. The transformation from interdependence in production of family members to dependence on wage inputs for security of the farm is a phenomenon which remains unexamined.

3. A third area requiring elaboration is the role of the state.

Critical analyses of the state are fairly recent and the complexity of this task makes it formidable. Such analyses as applied to farming would have to encompass the mediating role of the state in the market, the ideological function of the state and political parties, and the history and impact of agrarian protest movements, to mention only several aspects. This task is central to work in agricultural history because of the peculiar relation of political practice to agriculture from the first settlements.

While the scope of the analytic task here outlined is broad, a more comprehensive analysis of the determinants of agricultural production is required. It is essential that analyses cease to focus on "inefficiency" and "traditionalism" of individual producers and become recast at the level of explaining individual practice in terms of the social relations of production. The relation between autonomy and individual ownership must be demystified in order that the collective interests of farm producers can be articulated. The realities of productive organization rather than their ideological representations are the only adequate basis for political action of farm producers.

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MARXISM AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

THE MODES OF PRODUCTION DEBATE

Sut Jhally

There can be little doubt now, in any circles, as to the complete inadequacy of the development perspective that rose to prominence in the 1950's under the title of the "modernisation" approach and which found its main apologists in American social science (see the critique by Frank, 1970). The events of the 1970's (Latin America, Vietnam, Angola, Rhodesia, Iran, Chile) have illustrated the importance of Marxist analysis and its use as the ideological base of liberation movements. But increasingly, as more and more work has been produced on this particular subject so it has become clear that it is impossible any longer to talk of a single Marxist perspective on the issue of underdevelopment and imperialism (see Foster-Carter, 1973). Beginning with the Frank/Laclau debate in the 1960's Marxist theory has been increasingly divided within itself as to developing a coherent and practically useful paradigm. What this paper will attempt to do is to review the main body of literature that has grown up around the central theme of 'mode of production' and the process of transition between different modes, and will tentatively suggest future lines of analysis that could prove useful. In particular we will look at the work of Frank, Laclau, Rey and Dupré, Banaji and Hamza Alavi and suggest that the latter's approach is the most convincing. To apply the main features of the debate to contemporary underdevelopment we will argue that we need to reintegrate discussion in terms of a true Marxist social formation that is a complex unity, combining relations of exploitation, relations of production, circulation,

distribution, reproduction and other elements of the traditionally economic side of mode of production. In addition an integration of the superstructures and especially the role of the State into a Marxist perspective of the colonial and post-colonial reality is necessary. History, process and totality become the key terms, as well as the theoretical relationship between modes of production and social formations. (For parts of the ensuing argument we have drawn on Foster-Carter, 1978, especially his exposition of Rey's general theory.)

I The Critique of Frank

At the root of most radical analyses of underdevelopment we find the name of Andre Gunder Frank and it is with his most influential essay that we will start here. "The Development of Underdevelopment" (Frank, 1970) posited the theory of metropolis-satellite relations between the advanced capitalist countries and the underdeveloped periphery. In his work on Chile (Frank, 1967) Frank introduced two important concepts that underlay his whole work. The first one was the rejection of the theory of the 'dual society' where Latin America is divided into capitalist (developed) and feudal (underdeveloped) sectors. From its very first contact with mercantile capitalism Latin America has been incorporated into a capitalist world system. He writes,

the expansion of the capitalist system over past centuries effectively and entirely penetrated even the apparently most isolated sectors of the underdeveloped world (Frank. 1970:5).

Thus there were only seemingly feudal remnants that were created by the process of underdevelopment. We shall come back to this important point later with Laclau.

The second concept that he introduced was the contradictions of capitalism that 'caused' underdevelopment. The first contradiction was that of the "expropriation/appropriation of economic surplus" and involved

the distinction made by Paul Baran (to whom Frank owes an enormous intellectual debt) between 'actual' and 'potential' surplus. 'Actual' surplus is that part of the economic surplus that is saved and invested. 'Potential' surplus is that which is not available to society because of the monopoly structure of power. As David Booth has pointed out this is a different usage of the term 'surplus' than other Marxists have used. (in Oxall et al, 1975:68). The second contradiction that led to underdevelopment was 'metropolis-satellite polarisation'. Other analysts have termed this phenomenon unequal development (Amin, 1976). So,

One and the same historical process of the expansion and development of capitalism throughout the world has simultaneously generated - and continues to generate - both economic development and structural underdevelopment.

Rather than being stages of evolution (or 'stages of growth' as Rostow has labeled them) underdevelopment and development are dialectically related and interdependent. This polarisation between metropolis/satellite takes place on the national as well as the international level. The third contradiction was that of continuity in change. He referred to the

continuity and ubiquity of the structural essentials of economic development and underdevelopment throughout the expansion and development of the capitalist system at all times and places (Frank, 1967:12).

So the emphasis was on structures of dominance rather than on other historical changes that Latin America had experienced. This very basically is Frank's model. Latin America is and always was capitalist.

The response to Frank has come in two main stages, both of them Marxist. Firstly a group of Latin American Marxists argued that the metropolis/satellite model was overschematic and that what needed to be emphasized was the relations of dominance between the social classes internal to the colony. Dos Santos argued,

the process under consideration, rather than being one

of satellization as Frank believes, is a case of the formulation of a certain type of internal structure conditioned by international relationships of dependence,

and Weaver has stated,

the use of economic surplus, not merely its quantity, must be the centre of attention and this necessitates class analysis.

Frank has agreed himself that such a focus is vital and in one of his later works, Lumpenbourgeoisie: Lumpendevelopment, he writes,

This colonial and neo-colonial relationship to the capitalist metropolis has formed and transformed the economic and class structure, as well as the culture of Latin American Society. These changes in national structures have occurred as a result of periodic changes in the form of colonial dependence.... This colonial and class structure establishes very well defined class interests for the dominant sector of the bourgeoisie. Using government cabinets and other instruments of the state, the bourgeoisie produces a policy of underdevelopment in the economic, social and political life of the 'nation' and the people of Latin America. When a change in the forms of dependence modifies the economic and class structure, this in turn generates changes in the policy of the dominant class which further strengthens the same bonds of economic dependence which produced the policy and thus aggravate still further the development of underdevelopment in Latin America (Frank, 1972).

What this suggests then is an alliance between different bourgeoisies in the world system and while they may be structured in an hierarchy their collective interests are such as to ensure the active participation by the 'junior' members in perpetuating relations of exploitation that subjugate the mass of the people in the colonial countries so that the march of Capital goes unimpeded. Although we would argue that Frank has got the essence of the relationship, in terms of Marxist theory it is not expressed in a coherent and sound manner. We will see one aspect of this below.

The most wideranging critique to emerge of Frank has been from E. Laclau in his article, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America" (Laclau, 1971). He agrees that to view Latin America as a dual economy

is wrong. But instead of Frank's all-embracing and homogeneous capitalism Laclau suggests we view a structured and differentiated whole which is capitalist (i.e. the economic system). But within this are placed modes of production which are principally identified with relations of production and which are feudal and capitalist. Thus for Laclau a mode of production is not characterized by exchange (as for Frank) but by relations of production, and he goes to great lengths to point out the sections in Marx's work where he also identifies relations of production as the central element in mode of production. He suggests that Frank's difficulties in his definition (or non-definition) of what capitalism is start from his failure to recognize the difference between what Marx called 'capitals' and 'capitalism'. So in Marxist terms the mere existence of capital does not mean the existence of capitalism. (The essence of this critique of Frank is a point which Laclau himself would be as well to examine in his own work.) Merchant capital stands as a precursor of the capitalist mode of production. Indeed both Marx and Weber recognize the necessity of mercantile capital for the development of capitalism 'proper'. For Laclau then the mere existence of capital in the realm of exchange in the agrarian sector in Latin America is no proof that it is "developed capitalism's" capital, and explains Frank's basic mistake by reference to translation difficulties of Marx's German (i.e. translating 'capital' into 'capitalism').

Laclau defines a mode of production as

an integrated complex of social productive forces and relations linked to a determinate type of ownership of the means of production (Laclau, 1971).

Ownership of the means of production is recognized as the essential element in the definition of a mode of production which consists of (1) a determinative type of ownership of the means of production; (2) a determinative form of appropriation of the economic surplus; (3) a

determinative degree of development of the division of labour; (4) a determinative level of development of the productive forces. Feudalism exists in Latin America because on these levels there can be observed a difference between the agrarian sector and the urban sector. The agrarian sector is characterized by: extra-economic pressures that subject the labour force to produce a surplus (feudal dues and obligations); that surplus is then appropriated by someone other than the direct producer (appropriated by the landlord from the peasant); the means of production remain the property of the direct producer (the peasant owns the instruments of production as well as 'owning' the land - a share cropper).

Laclau writes,

In the capitalist mode of production, the economic surplus is also subject to private appropriation, but as distinct from feudalism, ownership of the means of production is severed from ownership of labour power; it is that which permits the transformation of labour-power into a commodity, and with this the birth of the wage relation. I believe it is possible within this theoretical framework to situate the problem of dependence at the level of relations of production (Laclau, 1971).

Having thus established to his theoretical satisfaction the existence of different modes of production Laclau then has to theorize the relations between the different modes. As already mentioned the context in which relations between feudal and capitalist take place is the 'economic system' (others have called it the social formation) which designates the mutual relations between different modes. Again Marx is used to differentiate between the concepts of 'mode of production' and 'economic system'. When Marx talked of the production of surplus value he was talking of a mode of production. But when he was theorizing the relations between different modes of production, or different sectors of the same mode, then he was talking about an economic system. So the level of exchange and circulation, which is the level that Frank is operating on, is only the level of the economic system and not that of the mode of

production. For Laclau, far from capitalism being contradictory to feudalism, the effect it has is to actually accentuate and consolidate the 'subordinate' mode. Rather than capital destroying feudalism it strengthens it. Examples are given from the history of Chile which show that capitalist entrepreneurs strengthened servile and traditional exploitation in the countryside to maximize profits. Thus far from the dualist thesis which maintains that two modes of production in an economic system exist independently of each other Laclau emphasizes the 'indissoluble unity' between them.

II Modes of Production in Indian Agriculture

Although Laclau's critique of Frank has provided invaluable insights into the problem of theorizing the nature of dependence, his own work also has serious weaknesses which until recently were not really recognized. Indeed the influence he has had on development field work has been immense but because of some theoretical deficiencies in his model these have also been problematic. A little publicized debate that went on in the pages of the Economic and Political Weekly between 1970 and 1973 on the characterization of the mode of production of Indian agriculture illustrates some of the problems. Doug McEachern has neatly summarized this debate (McEachern, 1976) in considering the questions that arose within the debate (what are the defining features of capitalism? How do we recognize them in agriculture? How do we define feudalism and its associated forms?). We have to focus on the following issues concerning the transition from "feudalism to capitalism".

- (1) The extent to which commodity production was generalised.
- (2) The extent to which landless labourers constituted a force of free wage-labourers.
- (3) The extent of capitals' involvement in circulation and relations of production.

(4) The significance of tenancy relations in agrarian production.

Firstly, on the question of the extent to which commodity production was generalized, the main protagonists were agreed as to the existence of general commodity production during the colonial period but a failure to specify when it became dominant in the mode resulted in a difference as to its significance. Patnaik argued that generalized commodity production was essentially a graft onto the traditional mode and that it did not alter existing conditions of production. Chattopadhyay, on the other hand, argued that generalized commodity production had to entail the existence of capitalist relations of production. That is, something (relations of production) must have changed to alter the status of non-commodities to commodities. But as Banaji argues, and as we agree below, relations of production are more than just the immediate relations apparent at the point of production. So even if the relations of production at the point of production remain the same it is possible that this could conceal a change in the effective relations of production (as compared to the relations of exploitation) within the context of a much wider definition of mode of production that includes a whole host of other elements. This is one of the major problems with Laclau and we will expand on this later.

Secondly, is the question of the extent to which landless labourers constituted a force of free wage-labourers. Again the argument centred on the extent to which landless labourers were free. Patnaik argued along the thoroughly unmarxist lines that the landless labourers were not really free (although they were free to sell nothing but their labour) because they were bound by poverty, numbers, lack of alternative employment and extra-economic pressures more in common with feudalism. But this is similar to arguing that the working class of New York is not really free (in the strictly Marxist sense of course) because of their lack of educational qualifications, their domination through T.V., etc..

Chattopadhyay, treating the landless labourers as a capitalist workforce was able to connect this to the generalization of commodity production as capitalism. Again we would emphasize the need to examine this in an overall context.

Thirdly, the debate focussed on the extent to which capital in the countryside remained in the sphere of circulation and did not actively affect the production relations in agriculture. This is the main focus of the Frank-Laclau debate and the debaters on India are tied up with very similar types of questions. For Patnaik the distinguishing feature between the feudal landlord and the capitalist was that the surplus be reinvested in improved techniques of agricultural production. This issue of reinvestment raised the very difficult question which McEachern identifies as "the extent to which the experience of colonialism served to intensify various forms of exploitation without capital entering the sphere of production " (McEachern, 1976:449). Patnaik reiterated Laclau's perspective that the existence of capital in circulation does not entail capitalism. But then Chattopadhyay does not argue that. Again as in the first two cases the context in which this capital operates is all important, and neither element on its own can be used to justify a characterization one way or the other.

Fourthly, the debate centred on the significance of tenancy relations in agrarian production. It is assumed that tenancy is incompatible with capitalism but both Patnaik and Chattopadhyay agreed that there were possible examples where tenancy was compatible with capitalism. Thus landlords can develop as representatives of landed capital, with tenancy thus transformed as a consequence or they can continue to live through the exploitation of rent. There was also the case whereby the tenant farmed through the use of wage labour and paid the landlord ground rent.

We introduced the Indian debate here as an important example of the

tendencies in development work since Laclau's critique and the kinds of difficulties it leads to. Hamza Alavi has written, "The Indian debate accepts too readily the assumptions and arguments advanced by Laclau having dismissed Frank's problematic totally " (Alavi, 1975). Alavi is not concerned with identifying whether Indian agriculture is capitalist or feudal, for it is clearly neither but in identifying its inbetween nature. He does so by integrating the type of issues examined above into an overall historical process which is reflected in the place of India in the development of a world system and her present role in such. He is positing a new mode of production, a colonial mode of production, which arises directly out of India's colonial relationship with Britain. That will be examined in more detail below. Here we wish to point out two further problems in Laclau's critique (in addition to the above). Firstly, there is the issue of Banaji's distinction between 'relations of exploitation' and 'relations of production'. Relations of exploitation are the particular form in which surplus is appropriated from the direct producer.

Relations of production, on the other hand, are the specific historically determined form which particular relations of exploitation assume due to a certain level of development of the productive forces, to the predominance of particular property forms and so on.... Thus capitalism cannot be defined in terms of the existence or non-existence of wage labour, for the latter is only transformed into a capitalist relation of production under certain historical conditions, in the first place its insertion into a framework of extended reproduction where 'unlimited expansion, perpetual progress, becomes the law of production' in contrast to all pre-capitalist modes of production where production was every time resumed in the same form and on the same scale as previously...thus the error which deduced feudalism from the prevalence of serfdom and the one which deduces capitalism from the existence of wage labour are symmetrical; they both confuse relations of production with relations of exploitation (Banaji, 1972, p. 2498).

Thus both Laclau and Frank are guilty of abstracting from a complex model and process elements that do not make sense except within that framework. But at least Frank is aware of some of the difficulties.

How, for example, would Laclau handle a single worker who is simultaneously "(1) owner of his own land and house; (2) sharecropper on another's land; (3) tenant on a third's land; (4) wage worker during harvest on all these lands; and (5) independent trader of his own home produced commodities " (Frank, 1967, pp. 271-2).

The second problem with Laclau which has been pinpointed with great accuracy by Alavi concerns the problem of contradiction. Laclau posits relations between the two modes as coexisting within the economic system. But if they were separate modes then in a Marxist sense the only relation between them would be one of contradiction and not coexistence. Although he speaks of an "indissoluble unity" it is a unity in an hierarchy, which is a feature of a single mode of production. What seems to be missing in Laclau's account is a notion of process from coexistence to domination. Contradiction implies process and because there is no contradiction there is no process. At least in Frank there is process even if it is of the very simple pre-capitalist to capitalist variety. We will come back to the work of Alavi and Banaji later but we now wish to focus on a European writer, Pierre-Phillipe Rey, who is dealing with similar types of problems, (the transition from primitive to modern) but uses entirely different language in their conceptualization. As such he is, we believe, more theoretically developed than either Frank or Laclau, although we will argue that his work has serious shortcomings which must be dealt with.

III Rey and the Articulation of Modes of Production

For Frank the issue of contradiction does not arise because we are dealing with a single mode of production. For Laclau contradiction is negated by 'indissoluble unity'. For Rey, contradiction and coexistence are not seen as total opposites but as conflicting features of a historical process in which the Althusserian notion of 'articulation' is vital to

his work. One of the defining features of the seminal work undertaken by Louis Althusser is a redefinition of the classical base/superstructure metaphor from one where the superstructures are a mere reflection of the economic base to a model where the superstructures have their own indices of effectivity (Althusser, 1977) (i.e. they have a determinate role in relation to the base and the other superstructures) both internally, and externally in relation to the base. What Rey and his colleagues have done is to apply this internal articulation between different levels of a mode of production to the articulation between modes of production. So the central notion of contradiction becomes a much more theoretically useful concept because articulation can define and specify the nature of that contradiction. Foster-Carter has written,

...just as Simmel observed 'conflict is a form of sociation' so contradiction among modes of production is a form of articulation. Each concept needs the other: articulation without contradiction would indeed be static and anti-Marxist, but contradiction without articulation (or transition without articulation) fallaciously implies that the waxing and waning of modes of production are quite separate activities, each internally determined, whereas in fact they are linked as are wrestlers in a clinch (Foster-Carter, 1978, p. 73).

This concept thus brings closer the mutual determining effects of contact between different economic units than certainly either Frank or Laclau managed, and even clearer than that 'articulated' by Alavi. Rey, who is the most theoretically advanced of those influenced by Althusser, seeks to explore the place of exchange in the relations between modes of production and the effect of this on relations of exploitation and production - especially on the dominance of one mode over another.

Rey, after introducing the notion of capitalism in Europe as developing not out of a contradiction in feudalism but in fact as feudalism protecting capitalism in its infancy (so that ground rent is identified by Rey as being part of feudalism and appearing as an integral part of

capitalism because of the articulation between the two modes), then goes on to examine the articulation of capitalism with pre-capitalist modes. Post has pointed out that the notion of articulation has two meanings, both of which give a clear definition of the process of articulation. Firstly it means to join together. Secondly it means to give expression to. So as two modes interact they are both affected by their interaction with the other. It is not a case of pure domination.

As Rey writes,

Capitalism can never immediately and totally eliminate the preceding modes of production, nor above all the relations of exploitation which characterize these modes of production. On the contrary, during an entire period it must reinforce these relations of exploitation since it is only this development which permits its own provisioning with goods coming from these modes of production, or with men driven from these modes of production and therefore compelled to sell their labour power to capitalism in order to survive (Foster-Carter, 1978, p.59).

Rey identifies three main stages in the process of articulation. (a)

Capitalism reinforces the pre-capitalist modes; (b) Capitalism subordinates the pre-capitalist whilst still using it; (c) The pre-capitalist totally disappears. As stated before such a labelling gives articulation a process as well as approaching the notion of the problematic of the contradiction which it negates. Rey writes of

the articulation of two modes of production, one of which establishes its dominance over the other... not as a static given, but as a process, that is to say a combat between two modes of production, with the confrontations and alliances which such a combat implies: confrontations and alliances essentially between the classes which these modes of production define (Foster-Carter, 1978, p.56).

So articulation is not just an abstract concept. It is about the basic essentials of imperialism - labour power and raw materials. It is also about alliances between classes with mutual interests of exploitation in the two modes. This notion of exploitation in the pre-capitalist mode is another important advance by Rey.

To illustrate the above types of concepts, Rey (in conjunction with Dupré) chose the case of West African lineage societies and the process of their articulation with capitalism. They start off by examining the role of exchange between elder groups in reproducing the conditions of production in the pre-capitalist mode. We are back again on Frankian territory. Rey and Dupré use Meillassoux's work and set out to examine why goods produced by one group (cadets - unmarried, young, male) can be entirely controlled by another group (the elders). After rejecting a number of conventional explanations based on physical coercion and control of technical knowledge, they argue that the vital element is that they reserve for themselves control of social knowledge and control of the cadets' access to women, which they guarantee by possessing the elite goods which are essential for marriage. So reproduction is achieved, in a sense, both materially and 'ideologically'. Elders in different groups within the mode of production form an alliance to protect their authority and power.

The control of matrimonial exchanges is one of the means by which the elders as a group guarantee the control of the demographic reproduction of the lineages. The reproduction of the cadets' dependence in relation to the elders is correlatively guaranteed (Rey and Dupré, 1973, p. 146).

For a cadet to become an elder he has to follow certain prescribed behaviour. Thus the elders had control of demographic reproduction and they in addition exercised control over the exchange of slaves, which entailed controlling the redistribution of men from demographically strong lineages to weak ones. This demographic reproduction is identified by Rey and Dupré as the essential condition for the reproduction of the conditions of production. The place of exchange (of slaves) is vital in reproduction. So what we have is the exchange of slaves between exchange partners as far as the coast; an exchange which is controlled by the elders of neighbouring groups to guarantee demographic reproduction and

which is based on these elders collectively controlling the elite goods which guarantee their dominant role in relation to the cadets.

Having now an idea of the traditional mode of production with which capitalism articulates we can now look at the precise process of that relationship. In the first period capitalism makes use of the exchange networks which allowed the movement of slaves from the interior to the coast and also the movement of products in the same direction. Factories are then set up on the coast which make use of both labour and raw materials supplied through the traditional mode and protected by the local chiefs. There is an alliance between the elders and the western traders and 'industrialists'. In addition to the installation of factories we can identify the 'tagging on' to the end of the lineage slave exchange, the slave trade of the west. This initial contact with capitalism served to reinforce the pre-capitalist mode of production. But, of course, it was no mere co-existence, for the slave trade could only survive by exploiting the internal contradictions of the lineage societies.

The demographically strong lineages which traditionally had no interest in reintegrating slaves as nominal cadets formed between themselves chains of exchange which excluded weak lineages in which slavery was no longer able to play the role of demographic corrective to more than a minimal extent (Rey and Dupré, 1973, p. 146).

The contradiction between the social function of exchange and the control by elders was further reinforced by this move towards hierarchization. But there is stability for a time. The dominant instance between the two modes is that of exchange. This first phase of articulation thus reinforces the existing mode while heightening and concentrating the contradiction.

The second phase of articulation is the colonial period where capitalism has taken root and become the dominant mode. For Rey and Dupré, colonialism arises because, when commodity exchange replaces slave and trade exchange, the political power of the local power holders (where the

changes of exchange terminated) collapsed. As a result political protection for trade has to be recreated from 'outside'.

The period of trade in products, as opposed to the period of slave trade, is an unstable period which goes by the name of colonialism (Rey and Dupré, 1973, p. 146).

To destroy the pre-capitalist mode Rey and Dupré state that violence is a necessity. Where capitalism is dominant but where pre-capitalist modes still exist and where they are needed by capitalism, violence has to take place on more than the economic level and must enter the superstructural level as well. Capitalism must have a legal and institutional framework to protect its naked economic violence. This mode is described as a 'transitional mode of production' and will dissolve when the time comes to give way to capitalism proper. We will question below the validity of this notion of the development of capitalism proper. By uniting different relations of exploitation under one unity Rey is working on the same ground as Alavi.

The third phase, the complete destruction of pre-capitalist modes by capitalism, has not as yet happened anywhere (and as we shall argue below it cannot structurally happen anywhere). What we would want to stress is that Rey and Dupré's approach seems to us to offer a much clearer picture of the actual process by which capitalism relates to other forms of society which it encounters in its expansion. It is not a mere imposition but a dialectical relationship that is taking place under the notion of articulation.

It was mentioned earlier that Rey and Dupré saw the use of violence between the first and second stage as a universal necessity in the articulation between capitalist and other modes. But it is this colonial relationship and its impact which they do not fully integrate into their otherwise sound theoretical scheme. The problems occur principally when we carefully study the role of the homoficence of

capitalism, the inside/outside distinction on the development of capitalism and the role of the colonial period in characterizing the nature of contemporary underdevelopment. Rey has insisted vociferously his opposition to voluntaristic notions of the development of capitalism (as in Kay's "capital created underdevelopment not because it exploited the underdeveloped world but because it did not exploit enough") and the need to view capitalism as homoficient - i.e. its internal structures and economic laws only allow one form of development. Again we are back in Frankian polemics (Frank, 1975). Thus articulation will have as its final stage the development of capitalism in all the colonies. But this is to leave out of the analysis of capitalist development the role played by active human beings. As Foster-Carter observes, we have heard a lot in the past few years of the latter part of Marx's dictum that "men make their own history but not in conditions of their choosing" and not enough of the former. As he points out, Rey is prepared to make an exception to this homoficiency of capitalism in the case of France between 1871 and 1958. The theoretical question is, if it can happen in France then why not elsewhere? This insistence on homoficiency is all the more irritating in that he has been one of the few Marxist development theorists to fully appreciate the impact the traditional mode of production has on capitalism. Leading from this problem is his view on the distinction (or lack of it) between capitalism emerging from outside or inside. Again Foster-Carter has provided the most illuminating insights into this issue. That Rey is aware of the distinction is clear from some of his statements:

Thus is the transitional social formation subject to a double history, where the contradiction bursts forth between two orders of necessity: on the one hand the history of capital itself, which for the most part is written outside such social formations; on the other hand the history of the transition, specific to the modes of production which are there articulated (Foster-Carter, 1978, p. 64).

But although he is prepared to allow the transitional form this double history he does not seem to see it as significant in terms of the overall development of capitalism. Regardless of its history (indigenous, colonial) capitalism will finally only have one form.

But the deficiency in his work of such a distinction leads to the third problem identified above - the role of the colonial period in characterizing the contemporary state of underdevelopment. The important point is that capitalism in the Third World has not taken a course similar to its development in the West. It is precisely because of this that we can talk of underdevelopment. Foster-Carter has written, and we quote at length,

the 'extraverted' nature of the Third World's original insertion in the capitalist world economy is not just of historical interest: it is a continuing and defining feature, not to be abstracted from, of the very essence of what we mean by 'underdevelopment'. Certainly we may see the thrust of, and indeed accept, Rey's basic claim that at one level the action of capitalism must be homocentric (else we would not be right to call it by a singular name, capitalism). But this must be complemented by analysis at the level of the social formations and their interrelationships, in a world system which gives analytical pride of place to what Rey blithely grants en passant: that capitalism comes to the 'Third World' from the outside, as foreign capital, indeed as colonial capitalism, and the extraversion thus created persists defining the character of contemporary underdevelopment, viz. as an externally oriented, distorted and indeed disarticulated 'part-economy' subordinated (now as ever) to metropolitan capital (Foster-Carter, 1978, pp. 65-66).

So the history of capitalism in the colonies continues to be written from outside the social formation. It is this that Rey misses but that Alavi captures. The development of a world system perspective has been a response to this phenomenon, as of course has the work of Frank. Balibar has summed up this problem of colonialism as

The event in their (the colonies) history is produced in the time of their diachrony without being produced in the time of their dynamics: a limit case which brings out the conceptual difference between the two

times, and the necessity of thinking their articulation (Balibar and Althusser, 1970, p. 301).

As far as Rey is concerned, despite the serious problems that were discussed, we feel that the theoretical basis of articulation is such as to suggest that some of the more recent attempts to characterize the process of underdevelopment would greatly benefit from their insertion into such a perspective and would prove to have greater historical incisiveness, as well as helping to pin down the nature of contemporary underdevelopment. Alavi's work is a case in point.

IV Alavi and the Colonial Mode of Production

Alavi is clearly dealing with the same problematic, although the word 'articulation' does not arise in the precise sense that was used by the French school. Banaji is the first to see the value of a new mode of production that arises as a result of capitalism's articulation with traditional modes, and as a solution to the confusion surrounding Frank's basic "mistake". That is

The process of integration of particular areas of the globe into a world market dominated by the capitalist mode of production was confused with the installation of the capitalist mode within these areas (Banaji, 1972, p. 2499).

For him the distance between the concepts of installation and integration can only be overcome by an adequate theory of colonialism, and in particular a colonial mode of production. Arguing against the coexistence of modes and using the distinction made above between relations of exploitation and production he sees no reason why a single mode of production may not contain a variety of relations of exploitation. We have to try and develop in terms of a colonial mode of production why capitalism did not take its 'logical' course in the colonies. The reason of course is that the colonies suffered from the part that they played as they were initially integrated into the world-wide pattern of capital accumulation under British domination. And because of the nature of the transition from colony to

independence some colonies still play a subordinate role in relation to the metropolis, which has shifted westwards from Britain to the U.S.A. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries the dominant form of accumulation remained colonial plunder, which was largely used to finance the industrialization and development of the white colonies as well as aiding industrialization in Britain itself. Banaji writes,

The colonial modes transmitted to the colonies the pressures of the accumulation process in the metropolis without unleashing any corresponding expansion in the forces of production...the mode of production installed in the colonies reduced the entire process of production to an immense superexploitation of variable capital (Banaji, 1972, p. 2500) (Our emphasis).

Thus the original and continuing colonial relationship "mutated" the "pure development" of capitalism in the colonies. Certainly development in India did not take the path foreseen by Marx, who saw colonialism as a revolutionary force that destroyed the traditional mode, which was enclosed and static (a strange thing for Marx to be saying considering his stress on dialectics and contradiction), and opened the way for an eventual development of socialism. Although Marx was correctly able to pinpoint the truly revolutionary nature of the impact of capitalism, the installation of private ownership (instead of possession) of land, he did not fully comprehend the nature of India's insertion into a developing world system (Marx, 1976, Chapter 33).

To examine the precise 'inbetween' nature of the colonial mode we shall now turn to Alavi and his penetrating analysis of Indian agriculture. We have to examine the notion of a colonial mode in the context of the class relationships and class alliances that manifested themselves in the period before and after independence. The landlords before independence lined up alongside the British rulers but even after independence they were able to retain power at the vital points, namely in the state

and the villages. Thus the populist ideology and rhetoric of the nationalists was considerably toned down when it finally came through as legislation.

Land reforms were a failure in India because attempts to create a small peasant economy along the Chinese lines could not be successful without a basic upheaval in the rural structure (Alavi, 1975, p. 163).

The impetus to develop a small peasant economy was provided not just by populist ideology but by the desires of the dominant bourgeoisie (indigenous and foreign) to derive a greater marketable surplus of agricultural produce. They were not directly concerned with the productivity of the peasant but with an increase in the marketable surplus. Clearly the small peasant strategy was failing and a new policy would be based on the re-alignment of class forces that took place in the 1950's. Before independence the indigenous bourgeoisie had been on the nationalist side against the landed class and the imperialist bourgeoisie. But after independence universal adult suffrage conferred on the rural power holders (the landlords) a new political role for it was they who dominated village politics. Thus the Nationalist leadership, the indigenous bourgeoisie, allied with the traditional rural power holders, and landed families which before independence had supported the pro-British Justice Party joined the Congress Party.

While at the national level the indigenous bourgeoisie and the imperialist bourgeoisie influenced the strategic decisions of the Government, the main body of the Congress Party machine was taken over by the land-owning classes. There was no more any question of the indigenous and foreign bourgeoisie attacking the interests of the landowning classes who were now their allies (Alavi, 1975, p. 163).

The new policy placed an emphasis on technological solutions within the confines of the existing class structure and it is this complex situation and process that led to the coining of a colonial and post-colonial mode of production.

Alavi attempts to conceptualize the main elements of a colonial mode by comparing it to the pure forms of feudalism and capitalism, but particularly in relation to the former. As such it emerges as a powerful critique of Laclau's thesis. One of the defining features of pre-capitalist modes is that they exhibit a low level of technology in the exploitation of the land and tend to small commodity production. Another feature is that the feudal economy is geared towards 'conspicuous consumption' by the landlords in a system of 'simple reproduction'. There are a couple of things to note in relation to these factors. Firstly, the scale of investments (i.e. the Green Revolution) in the last few decades have only been possible because of the installation and encapsulation of the colonial agrarian economy within the industrial world imperialist economy. Secondly in the colonial mode there is a system of expanded reproduction in contrast to the simple reproduction of pre-capitalist modes,

but of a deformed nature that characterizes the colonial mode, because a substantial part of the surplus generated in the colonial agrarian economy (as well as that generated in colonial industry) is appropriated by the imperialist bourgeoisie and enters into expanded reproduction not directly within the colonial economy but rather at its centre...(it) benefits the imperialist bourgeoisie rather than the colony (Alavi, 1975, p. 163).

So it is a deformed extended reproduction neither capitalist or feudal.

In pre-capitalist modes there is also an absence of generalized commodity production (although one of the elements in the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe was the development of simple commodity production). In India generalized commodity production was created and nurtured by imperialism and is at its precise service. Indeed the generalized commodity production is also of a deformed type. Amin terms the economies of the colonies as disarticulated internally so that different sections of the economy do not trade with each other directly but only through the imperialist centre, to which they are

subordinated.

Referring back to the distinction between relations of exploitation and production we have to understand the former as the latter only within an overall context that includes the legal and institutional frameworks within which such relations occur. So the distance between the political system of feudalism and the colonial state points to the different impact the relations at the point of production will have within different modes of production. Thus the localized power structure of feudalism was transformed in the colonial mode to a dialectic between central authority and local power which Perry Anderson has called the "parcellization of sovereignty" (Anderson, 1974, p. 148). So the colonial power subordinated the power of local power holders to its own power and the 'bourgeois revolution' in the 'colonies (overseen by the imperialist bourgeois) created

a bourgeois state and bourgeois property and a bourgeois legal and institutional apparatus precisely as an integral and necessary component to its economic domination (Alavi, 1975, p. 163).

One of the most refreshing parts of Alavi's overall work is his stress on the superstructures and specifically the role of the State in the colonial mode. Just as most other features of the colonial mode are a deformed form somewhere in between feudalism and capitalism so the colonial state is a deformed caricature of its capitalist model. Whereas in the metropolis the state oversees the affairs of the bourgeoisie and retains a relative autonomy in relation to the different fractions of the ruling class, in the colonies the state accomplishes this in relation to a wider range of interested classes, although still with the same interest (the maintenance of the colonial mode). The notion of a Colonial state will become increasingly important when we start discussing Alavi's conceptualization of a post-colonial mode of production, and the need to

use some of the theoretical constructs of 'articulation'. So the colonial state has to mediate relations between the three dominant classes; the indigenous bourgeoisie, the imperialist bourgeoisie, and the landed classes. And the instruments of this mediation are the state/military oligarchy that retain state power at the moment of independence because the indigenous bourgeoisie is too weak to wrest it from them. Without a fundamental break in the class structure of the colony metropolitan domination would continue, only under another guise and with the help of interested indigenous classes. Alavi writes,

The bourgeois revolution in the colony...is characterized by the imposition of colonial rule by the metropolitan bourgeoisie. In carrying out the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in the colony, however, the metropolitan bourgeoisie has to accomplish an additional task that was specific to the colonial situation. Its task is not merely to replicate the superstructure of the State which it has established in the metropolitan country; it must also create a state apparatus through which it can exercise dominion over all the indigenous social classes in the colony. It might be said that the 'superstructure' in the colony is therefore 'overdeveloped' in relation to the 'structure' in the colony, for its basis lies in the metropolitan structure itself, from which it is later separated at the time of independence. The colonial state is therefore equipped with a powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus and with governmental mechanisms that enable it, through routine operations, to subordinate the native social classes. The post colonial society inherits that overdeveloped state apparatus... (Alavi, 1973, p. 147).

The political level is also brought into his analysis. But again the important thing to note is the deformed character of the colonial state in relation to the pure capitalist form.

Before we examine the post colonial mode it would be as well here to review Alavi's enormous contribution to the debate of modes of production and the problematic elements in his work that could be improved with reference to some of the other literature we have been discussing. What Alavi has ingeniously accomplished is the reversal of the proposal of the articulation theorists, i.e. the articulation of several modes of production within a single social formation, into a single mode of

production which is inserted into numerous social formations. As mentioned before, for him the notion of contradiction precludes a conceptualization of the problem in terms of a number of modes of production within a social formation. But we have suggested that Rey is very aware of the problem and in fact gives contradiction a concrete process. But in the end we have to ask the question: is the reformulation of Laclau's 'indissoluble unity' into "a hierarchical structural relationship within a single mode of production, namely the colonial mode of production" any advance beyond the world system perspective? As Alavi himself asks, "should we not speak instead of an imperialist mode of production that embraces a global unity"? (Alavi, 1975, p. 190). This leads to a whole set of unanswered questions. What is the relationship of the colonial mode to the capitalist mode? Obviously it is a product of capitalism yet is it only a transitional form or the final form? But Alavi talks of a postcolonial mode so in some way it is not the final form. Yet it seems to be getting nearer the pure form all the time. Or can structural change only take place within certain capitalist defined limits? And if it is only a transitional form, Alavi is giving a lot of substance to shifting criteria. So the colonial mode of production is not a self contained unity. Is it then possible or legitimate to talk in terms of a mode of production? It seems the problems could be endless. But the articulation literature could help out here. Transition, process and articulation are vital ingredients to a coherent Marxist theory of underdevelopment and social change. So is Alavi's emphasis on the structures of dominance that operate within the colony, and between the colony and the metropolitan centre. It is just such a synthesis that is required at present. A proper conceptualization of the problem of modes of production as an abstract theoretical tool to help analyze the concrete reality of the social formation which is made up of many conflicting

elements. In other words what is being suggested is a shift of emphasis from the problematic notion of a mode of production to the level of the social formation. Both concepts still play a vital role but it seems easier to integrate the superstructures into a coherent analysis at the level of social formation rather than at the level of modes of production. So in a sense the superstructures and the role of exchange are easier to situate at the level of the formation, mediating as they do relations of exploitation.

We wish to conclude here with an exposition of Alavi's notion of a postcolonial mode of production and a discussion of the issues that this raises. We will try to supplement his theory with elements from the articulation school. The basic question here concerns the nature of the indigenous development of capitalism and its precise relation to metropolitan capitalism. Also it deals with the internally disarticulated nature of the colonial economy. Alavi states that a new kind of structural dependence between the Indian bourgeoisie and the imperialist bourgeoisies has been developing in the field of research intensive industries which has led to technical collaboration and a further convergence of interests between the two bourgeoisies. So with the consolidation of their relationship, the relationship between the dominating classes and the subordinated classes is even more acute. The structural exploitation of the Indian peasantry and proletariat by the metropolitan bourgeoisie is still present. What seems difficult to conceptualize is this change occurring within the confines of Alavi's previous theoretical schema, which seemed to imply that the colonial mode was such because of the structural role it played in relation to the industrialized world. Process was a vitally needed term. Just as structure is a term which Rey needs. As stated before, process without structure is thoroughly unmarxist.

Because of this change in the relationship between the two bourgeoisies the nature of the internal disarticulation of the economy has also changed. The deformed generalized commodity production and the deformed extended reproduction have been partially altered. Firstly, the pattern of generalized commodity production is now more internalized so that the internal disarticulation is less acute. However, "the external dependence is increasingly in the field of capital goods and research intensive technology, and not with regard to industrial commodities in general as before " (Alavi, 1975, p. 192). Secondly, there is an increased proportion of the surplus that is appropriated internally so that the process of extended reproduction is more internalized than before. Because the articulation approach includes the notions of contradiction and process it is easier to conceptualize this transformation in those terms. In Alavi's colonial mode it seemed that indigenous development was being held in a stranglehold by metropolitan capital. But the contradictions that were manifest on the economic and political level between indigenous and metropolitan were given room for expression as a result of class conflict and political changes and this has led to some kind of "independent" indigenous development. Articulation can still hold the distinction between outside and inside and integrate it into a process. Yet the structural component of Alavi's analysis is just as important for a coherent conceptualization of contemporary underdevelopment. A true synthesis is what is required.

Conclusion

As is clear from the above exposition, we believe that a global perspective to the issue of the development of underdevelopment is essential, incorporating as it does the history of imperialism, colonialism, domination and underdevelopment. But such a perspective should also transcend a theory of geographical domination of one area by another by placing

firmly in the centre of the analysis the vital notion of class and class alliances. The Frankian model needs a clarification and extension that is suggested by the work of Rey where the precise nature of the articulation between capitalism and the pre-capitalist form is specified. It was suggested in the analysis that Alavi is the most theoretically advanced of the recent theorists but that there existed various problems in his work which although it captured the vital colonial relationship and the structural changes that this instituted, as well as the effects of those structures on contemporary underdevelopment, was somewhat lacking in the notion of process and contradiction within what he terms a colonial mode of production. Thus what was suggested was an application of some of Rey's theoretical concepts to Alavi's work, i.e. a true synthesis which would advance Marxist theory. A distinction between the types of relationship between capitalist and pre-capitalist societies is much needed.

One of the major conceptual problems that we dealt with was the distinction between modes of production as theoretical entities and social formations. Rey and Laclau refer to the social formation within which separate modes articulate, although they differ on the nature of the articulation. Alavi on the other hand identifies a single mode of production within which exist several social formations (an essentially correct position). The problem with Alavi's (and Frank's and Wallerstein's) work is that the mode of production is so gigantic in scope (international and global) that in a practical sense there is a need to conduct the debate at a slightly lower level, whilst still working with a world perspective. We need to find a middle road between the micro notion of Laclau's relations of production (exploitation) and Frank's macro exchange systems. And if we want to include within our units of analysis elements of both the base and superstructures and remember Marx's adage that

Production, distribution, exchange and consumption
...all form the members of a totality, distinctions within
a unity (Foster-Carter, 1978, p. 76).

then it seems at a practical level that the social formation is
the easiest and most fruitful level at which to conduct debate, whilst
at the same time using the abstract notion of mode of production to
inform the details of the debate.

Social formations can deal better with an incorporation of super-
structural elements into the discussion. Thus, the political and state
levels are easier to define and identify on the level of the social forma-
tion, enclosing as they do, and referring to, distinct cultural and
national boundaries. Foster-Carter warns against a narrow economism
that has dogged the modes of production debate:

Reification aside, too little attention has been paid
to other 'instances' and 'practices' than the economic:
notably the political, not to mention those areas
(ideology, religion, kinship ideas) which correspond
to people's own consciousness of their position. This
is not a plea for ethnomethodology but it is certainly
above all a clarion call for class seen as the key
mediator between (to oversimplify) modes of production
and human action (Foster-Carter, 1978, p. 72).

Thus, the study of the colonial state can only make sense within a study
of the world system. Yet it makes little practical sense to talk about
a single mode of production with a single set of superstructures. The
state in the nation-state of the colony plays a different role than the
state in capitalist societies. To talk about them as elements of a
single superstructural framework is not at all fruitful. In a practical
sense the social formation within which it immediately functions seems a
useful place to start the debate.

All the elements we have discussed have to be integrated into an
overall complex of relationships and structures of action and in the end
we have to acknowledge as basically correct Frank's shadow across the
whole literature.

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A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA STUDIES

Janice Monti Belkaoui

Sociological theory has played an important role in the development of mass communications studies but until recently sociologists have not shown much commitment to media-related inquiries. The dismissal of mass media studies to the marginal areas of the sociological enterprise is unfortunate. Sociology can make an important contribution in the codification of empirical findings about the media within its theoretical foundations. While this strategy has been advocated by both traditional and contemporary thinkers, from Max Weber to Robert Merton, few have made serious attempts at a synthesis of theory and media research, or, more precisely, at reconciling to some degree what is said about the media with what is known about its societal impact. This paper outlines some of the reasons for this hiatus, points out the existing but largely ignored links between sociological theory and media research, and concludes with a modest suggestion for the integration of media research within the paradigms of political sociology and stratification.

I. What We Say: Conflicting Conceptions of the Development of Mass Media Studies

A. The Nature of the Critique of Media Studies

Mass media studies were among the principal irritants precipitating C. Wright Mills' charge that some brands of sociological inquiry are little more than sterile exercises in abstracted empiricism. In reviewing the many critiques of mass communications studies, a perennial

theme is the allegation of theoretical and conceptual immaturity. One popular form of this attack argues that media researchers, especially the North American variety, have spent their time refining sophisticated methodologies and statistical techniques while paying scant attention to the theoretical implications of their work. One recent assessment of American studies charges that the obsession with methods is "...symptomatic of a theoretical vacuum in which the paucity of ideas is masked by a dazzling display of empirical ingenuity" (Golding and Murdock, 1978). This criticism is hardly of recent vintage. Exactly two decades ago, Berelson delivered what was regarded by many as a eulogy for media studies, charging among other things that the field was troubled not so much by its paucity of theory than by a paucity of theorists. The state of communication research, in Berelson's play on words, was "withering away" as its founding fathers, men like Hovland, Lasswell, Lazarsfeld and Lewin, moved on to other areas (Berelson, 1959).

The lack of a theoretical foundation has sometimes been attributed to the pragmatic research orientations of the discipline's pioneers. Major determinants for the directions pursued by these early researchers included (1) the research monies offered by the U.S.'s infant broadcasting industry to map out its existing and potential audiences and (2) the pressing war-time demand by the U.S. military for propaganda studies. The administrative needs of these sponsors did much to set the agenda for the next three decades of communication research,

resulting finally in a preponderance of practically-oriented manipulation, effects and personal influence studies. While these efforts contain something of a theoretical base, especially at the level of social psychology, they are most often viewed as forming part of the areas of policy analysis or political science rather than sociology proper. In general, however, studies from this first generation of media research in the social sciences were concerned with the elaboration of quantitative techniques for the measurement of effects at the expense of theoretical formulations. (An account of this period and its implications for sociology can be found in Gans, 1972).

The reputation of mass media studies has been discredited by the persistent charge of theoretical vacuity. The accusation has been made with such enthusiasm and frequency that seldom is the charge itself subject to evaluation. An overview of the sociological analysis of mass media suggests that the criticism is unduly severe. The history of the sociology of media does reveal at least implicit theoretical strains. They do not emerge sequentially nor do they reveal a linear progression of development but conform more to a multiple paradigmatic view of sociology, revealing a set of contending theoretical perspectives, or, perhaps more accurately, alternative conceptual frameworks, some of which are more fruitful than others. The study of media emerges not as an atheoretical activity but perhaps as one hindered by too much of it. What follows is a brief sketch of the most prominent of these perspectives.

B. Sociological Theory in the Study of Mass Communications

1. Early Sociological Approaches

While an extensive analysis of the press and other forms of popular media did not assume a central role in the nineteenth and early twentieth century development of sociology, the media were at least acknowledged as a peculiar feature of modern and increasingly differentiated societies. For example, the nature and power of a modern and rationalized press attracted the attention of Max Weber, particularly the phenomenon of an increasingly bureaucratized process of newsgathering. That the questions and research program he proposed six decades ago still constitute a relatively unexplored area is an indication of the current state of underdevelopment in media sociology. Specifically, Weber was concerned with what gets "publicized" and what does not, corresponding to the quite recent work on the mechanisms of gatekeeping and agenda-setting. Weber's interest in media ownership and control is even more indicative of his vision, especially when viewed in relation to recent critical queries into the monopolistic tendencies of media industries and the ways this translates into legitimating systems of ideology through media content. Weber's media sociology focused on the

...power relations which create publicity,
particularly the conditions of economic power...
How does the press get its material? What is
the position of the great news bureaus and
how are they internationally related to each
other? What is the position of the creative
journalist in this intrinsically rationalized
system of the modern press? (Weber in Mayer,
1946)

The media's role in achieving and maintaining cohesion in modern complex societies was given some attention in the early years of American sociology by members of the Chicago School. The press was viewed as an emerging and necessary social institution for the integration of diverse immigrant groups and rural migrants into the mainstream of urban American life. This approach introduced the now familiar notion that, in modern industrial societies, mass media provide the lost sense of community associated with less industrial, village-based social groupings. The concern with media displayed by the Chicago School sociologists was to a large extent a byproduct of their broader based inquiries in human ecology and ethnic relations in community settings. Because of this primary orientation, their writings on the press never made much impact on media research nor did they elicit much response from the North American sociological community.

2. Consensus Theories

The emergence of functionalism as the dominant paradigm in sociology by the mid-twentieth century has important implications for this generation of mass communications research. Functionalism in postwar North America became a theory cum ideology of stable and egalitarian democracy. Functionalist-inspired research focused on stabilizing and integrating relationships among society's institutions. In the form of pluralism, functionalist studies analyzed mechanisms of checks and balances among contending sources of power. Functionalist

approaches also depict mass media as an information and entertainment organ, operating independently of society's interest groups. Within this general framework, mass media are said to perform certain objective and systematic socialization and integration functions for the social system. Most representative of this approach is the work of C.R. Wright (1960; 1975) whose influential textbook on mass communication asserts that the "...transmission of culture focuses on the communication of information values and social norms from one generation to another" (Wright, 1960:16). Taking his cue from Merton's reformulation of functionalism as a mode of analysis and middle range theoretical strategy, Wright has provided his own reformulation of a general sociological framework for the analysis of mass media. This approach is built upon the following question:

What are the intended and unintended functions and dysfunctions of mass communicated surveillance, correlation, cultural transmission and entertainment for society, subgroups, the individual and the cultural system? (1960).

Despite the more critical intentions of this reformulation, media researchers who have adopted this perspective continue to focus on the role of media systems in promoting integration and consensus. In these renditions, media emerge more often as agents of socialization rather than of social control (e.g., Janowitz, 1952; Katz, et. al., 1973; Singer, 1975; Allen, 1976).

Although the functionalist paradigm is no longer in its ascendancy, its application to empirical media research continues to have considerable impact. One specific approach which has attracted a number of adherents is a kind of synthesis of functionalism and behaviourism,

the "uses and gratifications" approach (see, e.g., the Blumler and Katz reader, 1975). This literature tries to specify the links among the individual, media and society. An individual, in response to his social environment (determined by his social position, socialization, etc.), develops certain functional requisites or needs (for information, entertainment, contact, security, etc.) which are met by different varieties of media content. This basic paradigm has given rise to an entire catalogue of social effects and individual functions in a manner similar to the earlier Lasswell-Lazarsfeld-Merton tradition. Thus mass media are shown to provide information, advice, companionship, escape, entertainment and, implicitly, a core system of values. Criticisms lodged against this approach reflect those which have been directed at functionalism in general. The "uses and gratifications" literature has added little to our existing understanding of media's impact on society or individuals. The approach can be viewed as an extreme form of psychological reductionism because of the more or less explicit assumption that the explanations of media functions for total societies can be found in uncovering their functions for individuals. The approach has attempted to redefine "social effects" by starting with a rather problematic "given" --- an integrated, non-stratified, homeostatic society --- and then proceeds to question how the media have contributed to this result.

The excessively descriptive bent inherent in the functionalist tradition has led some theorists to look for more general and

explanatory frameworks in the fields of information and systems theory. These perspectives still retain elements of structural-functionalism in that they tend to incorporate the notion of a social system, however defined, as the level of analysis. An assumption of equilibrium among system parts is also common to both approaches. Information and systems theories of communication generally have met with more favour from communications specialists who view media vehicles primarily in technological terms than from media sociologists. The principal deficiency of such perspectives from the vantage point of theoretical sociology is their lack of attention to societal impact and change.

3. Conflict Theories

The functionalist-based consensus model of society and media views mass communications vehicles as integrative mechanisms providing functional substitutes for traditional forms of order, cohesion and community. An alternative perspective, drawn from variants of elite, Marxist and critical orientations, casts the mass media in the role of legitimating agents of social control in complex industrial societies. Such approaches, until recently, have had less impact than the consensus model in media sociology. At the most general level, sociological conflict approaches view the emergence and current functions of mass communications as an historical outgrowth of the structuration of economic or power relations between dominant and subordinated social groups. In pluralist accounts of the rise of modern media systems, one focal point is the autonomy of privately-owned media industries from state and political control. In contrast,

the conflict approaches not only acknowledge the importance of tracing the media's formal and informal links to authority but are also more centrally concerned with investigating the media as an agency of legitimation in relation to the structure and unequal distribution of social resources. In particular, this emphasis has prompted the elite or instrumentalist perspective's concern with the ideological implications of monopoly control over media industries. Putting aside for the time being the results of empirical analyses of media ownership and control, at a purely theoretical level, proponents of the instrumentalist perspective view the modern media as the major ideological apparatus in the hands of the capitalist class. In Miliband's framework (1969), for example, the media take on an instrumental role in Western industrial society. They are characterized not only by their "bourgeois" ideology, transmitted through advertising and program content, but also by monopoly control and by collusion of state and economic interests over management's decisions. Western media systems, because of their organizational peculiarities, perform a crucial ideological function in perpetuating a global capitalist system.

Another variant of the conflict perspective comes out of the Frankfurt School's critical theory tradition. While critical sociology rejects the notion that the institutional incorporation of the working class has been accomplished, it questions the role of media content and other forms of popular culture in creating and maintaining the working class's false consciousness. In this view, workers and large segments of the middle class are merely receivers and consumers

of media-sanctioned ideas and material goods. The media, under the control of capitalist interests, aim for the widest common denominator and are commercial rather than public-interest oriented. These traits, according to the Frankfurt School's formulation, debase the audience and lower average levels of literacy and culture (see, e.g., Adorno and Horkheimer, 1977). In recent years, the Frankfurt School, under the direction of Habermas, has embraced a "self-liberating" ideology of praxis. This literature advocates the establishment of an alternative media system, open to expression of diverse opinions and cultures and operated independently of commercial pressures. The major point of contention between the critical theorists and the functionalists is that the former argue that changes in media systems should originate with interest groups outside the industry rather than from media professionals as advocated by the pluralists who largely embrace a "free press" and social responsibility model of media organization.

One variant of neo-Marxist sociology which quite recently has begun to apply a "theory of ideology" to the analysis of mass media draws its theoretical base from German idealism, structuralism and semiotics. This "cultural studies" approach, as it is termed, places media systems and content in the context of culture as a whole. The key concept "culture" is vaguely defined as the set of relationships between a society's social order and the totality of symbolic forms through which meanings are transmitted (Hall, 1977). Within this broad conception of culture are placed not only the media but also art, literature, religion, non-verbal and verbal

interpersonal communication, clothing, and other expressions of life-style. This approach begins with the assumption that all cultural items, in the form of media content and social artifacts, contain elements of the processes and ideologies inherent in their creation, which, when apprehended by the analyst, can serve as interpretive tools. Mass media artifacts are viewed as "texts" and are analyzed by "reading off" their multiple levels of social meanings and placing these meanings in the general context of societal relations and organization. These descriptions of core assumptions and appropriate methods are vexingly vague and proponents of the cultural studies approach have written little in a less idiosyncratic vocabulary which might enlighten those outside the paradigm. This kind of interpretation is based on a naive leap of faith that makes an analogy between contemporary cultural products and class structure in capitalist society. Stuart Hall (1977), the principal adherent to the cultural studies approach, borrows the concept of 'hegemony' from Gramsci to convey a similar argument that cultural and media products are part of the ideological superstructure resting on society's economic base. Hegemony represents an artificially imposed social order based on moral and intellectual justifications diffused throughout all classes to conceal domination and shape all aspects of social life. In Hall's statement, hegemony is said to exist when the ruling class not only exercises the power to coerce but also wins the consent of the other classes. Thus hegemony is created and maintained through both force and consent. In a liberal capitalist

state, consent is usually the predominant mode of hegemonic relations but it is said to operate as well behind an "armour of coercion". Hegemony is therefore not simply an outcome of economic relations but involves the organization of superstructural relations in the state and polity and, in the form of ideological influence, in the mass media. The obvious issue which this approach is attached to but never directly addresses is the conditions under which superstructural relations, especially ideological domination through the media, are determined by class relations. The various proponents of this "theory of ideology" invoke but never go beyond Marx's famous dictum that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas", never demonstrating how ideological domination by the capitalist class is created and sustained. This is not an explanation; rather it is a question to be investigated. At the empirical level, it is necessary to find evidence of how hegemony is actually reproduced through the decisions of media personnel, through media content, and through consumer and political behaviour. Interpretive analysis from cultural texts, no matter how ingenious or suggestive, are no substitute for this kind of systematic inquiry. Another crucial problem in employing this approach in mass media studies is the irreconcilability of textual and empirical sociological methodologies.

However tenuous one finds the above positions, they raise, in one form or another, the major issues in the contemporary critique of modern media. Yet these positions do not yield much in the way of sociological insight, for devoid of an empirical base they tell us

nothing of the conditions under which the mass media have been organized, why the range of content offerings is so predictable, and what specific effects, if any, the media have on social structure. In isolation, without empirical substantiation, these positions have little relevance as the foundations for an informed sociological theory of mass communications. They must be integrated into and assessed in terms of what is known about mass media in modern life. With that aim in mind, the following section will discuss the most prominent research areas in mass communications studies, the social effects tradition and the inquiries into media ownership and control, and, finally, the more recent linking of power and stratification studies with media analysis.

II. What We Know: Some Major Themes in the Empirical Tradition

A. The Context of Evidence About Media's Societal Impact

The various theoretical approaches have all asserted in one form or another the power of the mass media over their audiences. The question now is whether this argument can be substantiated empirically. Indeed, the findings while vast are also conflicting as a number of excellent summaries of social effects research reveals (see, e.g., McQuail, 1976; Halloran, 1970; Hovland, 1954; Klapper, 1960). As a point of departure, it should be kept in mind that the assumption of media determinism has enjoyed a long historical primacy. Long before scientific techniques were applied to questions of media's societal impact, it was generally taken as axiomatic that the emerging mass press and infant film and broadcast industries would be as

politically and socially powerful as any historical forms of persuasion. Because of this widespread belief, the earliest research efforts on modern media's effects were formulated and conducted with high expectations of the media's impact which were not always borne out. This accounts for what McQuail observes as an evolving sequence of thinking "...in which the media have been viewed first as highly effective and irresistible, subsequently relatively powerless and latterly re-evaluated as having a real potential for achieving effects" (McQuail, 1976:58). In fact, the post-war generation of media effects studies can be labelled the "no-effects" view. The Lazarsfeld et. al. classic inquiry into the media and voting behaviour (1948), for example, concluded that few people changed their opinions of candidates during an election and, rather than media coverage, discussion with others was the primary cause of this change. More recent studies of election campaigns are believed to confirm this view that the media, especially the press, make little impact on forming voting behaviour or instigating political change (Berelson, et. al., 1954; Lang and Lang, 1959; 1968a, b). Klapper's influential summary of this first generation of effects literature modifies the finding of "no effects" to that of "partial effects", concluding that the media seldom convert or overtly manipulate audiences but certainly reinforce and confirm their existing opinions and beliefs. Klapper's conclusion, while influential, has been misleadingly interpreted. Reviewers have tended to overgeneralize media's indeterminacy and ignored the specific conditions

under which significant media effects can be isolated. In returning to this literature, it is possible to draw out a series of confirmed propositions about media effects which can lead to further inquiries. This core body of findings, however suggestive, is in need of codification and considerable refinement. Unfortunately the social effects tradition has often ignored the early foundation. Consequently, contemporary research has not added measurably to our understanding of media's societal impact.

A good deal of the more recent research on press effectiveness falls within the same functionalist-behaviourist tradition discussed above and is subject to the same difficulties. The primary foci of the contemporary inquiries are personal influence and the media, political effects and the information and agenda-setting functions. Although this research on press effects is extensive, some specific features of the press have been left unexplored. This approach because of its disinterest in content analysis and in questions of ownership and control largely ignores the partisan positions adopted by newspapers and broadcast stations and their impact on political behaviour. Also, the role of non-news entertainment content in providing definitions of political situations has seldom been subjected to rigorous empirical scrutiny. The field seems stagnated by the narrow definition of political activity as "voting behaviour". Only a few among the recent studies have examined the media's role in shaping definitions of broader political situations. All in all, the recent contributions to press effects research

seem to suggest that news media do play a significant role in shaping political behaviour. This is by no means the whole picture of media's societal impact nor does it indicate the state of effects research in general.

Sixty percent of all the studies dealing with media and human behaviour address the nature and effects of children's exposure to the entertainment content of television. Most of these studies draw their theoretical foundations from the various modelling, social learning and interactionist perspectives. This body of literature has tried to establish a causal connection between television exposure and aggressive behaviour. Taken as a whole, it is suggestive and may contribute to the erosion of the prevailing "no-effects conclusion on the issue of media and societal impact. However, the many inconsistencies in the literature cannot be overlooked. A variety of theoretical and methodological difficulties can be identified including design errors and unfounded or over-enthusiastic inferences from the individual to the societal level as well as researcher and experimenter bias.

As it stands, the social effects research, whether it addresses political behaviour or the broad issues of socialization, has not resulted in an accumulation of knowledge about the societal impact of media content. The major deficiencies stem from methodological and theoretical oversights. First, the literature is flawed by a lack of clear definitions or by restricted definitions for key

variables. For example, political behaviour is most often conceptualized as party affiliation or voting behaviour, ignoring media portrayal of non-electoral but politically salient issues such as labour unrest, race relations, economic matters and so on. Also, the research preoccupation with children and anti-social behaviour has done surprisingly little to clarify the operationalization of key terms like violent behaviour, aggression and heavy viewing. Secondly, the relationship between media effects and stratification has not been adequately explored. Again this is a direct result of mainstream sociology's neglect of mass communication research. Further investigations are needed to determine the extent to which racial, cultural, sex and class differences are related to differences first in patterns of media exposure and second in social behavioural outcomes. Another area of concern is the extent to which the socialization agents of family, school, workplace, peer groups, etc., affect the perception of media images, in news as well as entertainment content. More attention needs to be directed toward the extent of differential effectiveness of newspapers over broadcast media. Finally, the social effects literature suffers from an extreme abstracted empiricism. Despite the current theoretical emphasis on legitimization, integration, social control and the like in theoretical sociology, the social effects studies remain glued to the narrow concerns of voting and aggressive behaviour. The effects tradition provides us with the most striking example of the gap between theory and research in media analyses.

B. The Context of Evidence About Ownership and Control of Media

The inquiry into media ownership and control is possibly the one empirical tradition in mass media studies that is explicitly related to a theoretical tradition in sociology. This tradition is within the confines of the sociology of power and stratification and tends to characterize the media's position of power in industrial societies in terms of pluralist or elite frameworks. In very recent years, a trend toward more explicitly Marxist analyses can be traced (e.g., Murdock and Golding. 1973; 1977) but relatively few empirical studies can rightly claim a Marxist pedigree. When applied to mass media, the power and stratification frameworks shift the focus from the individual level of analysis of the behavioural effects tradition to a more macroscopic concern with the place of mass media in the social structure, especially their role in the organization of social, political and economic relations.

The pluralist approach posits the existence of socially responsible yet privately-owned and autonomous media industries. The argument is often suggested that the "free press" model does not imply freedom to be objective but simply freedom from any outside influence. In this most basic formulation, the model is closest to a pure laissez-faire interpretation of the function of the media. An autonomous media system sets up an open and competitive free market of ideas. The more diversity and competition among media vehicles, it is argued, the more likely the best and most accurate information and ideas will be the most widely assimilated and accepted.

The interpretation based on elite theories rejects the pluralist assumptions of media responsibility and autonomy. Instead, it posits that competing sets of elites attempt to legitimate their power through increasing concentration of control over society's major institutions, including mass media. Indeed, the media are viewed as one of the most powerful tools for maintaining and legitimating the existing structure of social relations. Although a problematic inferential leap is made from the analysis of elite control of media to the allegation of specific ideological consequences, the actual empirical inquiries in the elite tradition are usually concerned with the patterns of media ownership, whether economic and informal contacts link media personnel with government or other business elites (see, e.g., Porter, 1965; Clement, 1973; Fournier, 1976; Nixon, 1966; Baer et. al., 1974).

The pluralist and elite approaches have been applied to the empirical analysis of media ownership and control in several nations. Much of the literature is flawed by the assumption that the

organizational and economic contexts in which the media operate also imply broad ideological effects on the societal level. The empirical research reveals little relationship between concentration of ownership and media content slant, regardless of the economic and political organization of the nations under study. In the U.S., for example, the research disagrees over the extent of monopoly ownership as well as over the effect of concentration on the media professionals' social responsibility ethic. With regard to the issue of concentration, one student of this trend finds a tendency toward increasing monopolistic

control of the local daily press as well as increasing evidence of cross-media ownership (radio-TV-press) (Nixon, 1955; Nixon and Hahn, 1971). Little evidence is given, however, to establish the relationship between concentration and owner influence over content. In fact, one study reports little publisher interference under monopolistic conditions (Bowers, 1967). A recent report, in spite of its critical orientation, concluded that owner influence was probably more likely in small independent media since control over the content of chain-owned media is usually less directly exercised (Murphy, 1974). A comprehensive review of the current state of knowledge on the relationship between concentration of ownership of American media and content finds almost no evidence of owner influence over the coverage of issues or editorial slant nor any difference between competitive and monopoly media sectors. In fact, among the U.S. studies, the only evidence of the existence of hegemonic control is Stempel's observation that residents in media monopoly towns are less well informed than residents in media competitive regions (Stempel, 1973).

The Canadian literature on ownership and control is also marred by the problematic inference of ideological effects through owner and managerial collusion. Porter, for example, whose own theoretical position derives from both pluralist as well as elite perspectives, argues that the upper class backgrounds of the media elite provide evidence of this group's ability to use media content to legitimate existing class relations and political structures:

...the unifying of value themes is achieved through the control of media of communication and therefore the structure of the ideological system becomes articulated with other systems of power. The ideological system must provide the justification for the economic system, the political system, and so forth, and this it does by attempting to show that the existing arrangements conform with the traditional value system (Porter, 1965:460).

However, at the empirical level, Porter's method of examining social origins of media personnel is hardly appropriate to his radical assumption of ideological hegemony. Although his findings indicate largely upper class British origins of media management, ownership of the media industry is firmly in Canadian hands. This leads to further conjecture:

...The absence of foreign control... would suggest that they are not sufficiently profitable to be taken over by foreign investors. It might also suggest a reluctance on the part of Canadian owners to sell these properties because they are viewed, not primarily as economic instruments, but as institutions which have a public responsibility (1965:482).

In essence, Porter's conclusion falls back on an assumption of autonomous and socially responsible media, which is a much different position from the one he began with. Clement's attempt to update Porter's analysis of Canadian media and to recast it in a more explicitly critical perspective has also been only moderately successful in empirically demonstrating the relationship between media ownership and manipulation (Clement, 1973). In addition, his analysis has been criticized for its naive economic determinism, its lack of fit between theory and data, and, recently, from within the critical tradition, for its inattention to non-economic, political and structural factors (see Baldwin, 1977). The problematic assumptions of the ownership and

control literature on Canada are even more suspect when juxtaposed with the results of the empirical research on political coverage by the Canadian press. A content analysis of seven newspapers with highly-concentrated ownership established no hint of editorial collusion on the choice of issues, extent of coverage or editorial endorsements (Wagenberg and Soderlund, 1975).

Although both the Marxist and the elite perspectives are concerned in varying degrees with the power of the ruling elite to create and maintain ideological hegemony, the latter approach is concerned with the amalgamation and maintenance of bureaucratic power while the former is occupied with the analysis of class relations as they shape the distribution of power in all aspects of social life. When applied to mass media, the Marxist, or class model, assumes that both the structure and content of the press and other media are determined by the historically-specific positions of power maintained by different classes. The media are part of the ideological super-structure which rests on the economy's material base. In modern capitalism, the media are the bourgeoisie's principal tools for hegemonic control over the working class. At the empirical level, adherents to the Marxist approach do not concern themselves with the type of network analyses of media ownership which typifies the elite orientation. Instead, they argue that the functions of the media are determined by the structured patterns of relations between classes rather than by individuals who occupy decision-making positions. Because of this distinction, Marxist media analyses

tend to avoid the problematic assumption of conspiratorial personal intervention and manipulation which detracts from even the most elegant studies in the elite tradition. The Marxist model instead attempts to demonstrate media's role in creating and sustaining ideological hegemony through purely structural features. Consequently, their analyses are historical and focus on horizontal and vertical integration, diversification, the nature of control and the conversion of information into a marketable commodity as well as the ideological and technological transfer from capitalist to peripheral third world countries (see, e.g., Murdock and Golding, 1973; 1977; Golding, 1977; Boyd-Barrett, 1977; Westergaard, 1977; Janus, 1977). These pioneering works are suggestive and worthy of wider attention among sociologists operating in a critical tradition.

Both the social effects and the ownership and control literature, despite uneven evidence, rest on the axiomatic premise of media's broad societal impact, an assumption which has characterized the discipline since the first generation of media research. As the above overview suggests, this position has coloured not only the way in which theoretical questions are posed but also the way in which research is carried out. Consequently, the accumulation of knowledge about the media's actual effects has been retarded. Of course, there is probably more than some truth to the persistent belief that media programming contributes to a wide range of social behaviour in both children and adults and that the structure of media organizations influences the nature of this content. However, the methods used to investigate these concerns have not

proven appropriate to the task. This is precisely where the body of sociological knowledge in such relatively well-developed areas as power and stratification can be of help.

III. What Lies Ahead: Towards a Sociology of Mass Media

Mass communication, as a social institution, must be viewed in relation to what is known in sociology about the distribution of power and other social resources. In the area of social effects, for example, this strategy would round out the few exploratory attempts to trace media's treatment and impact on minorities and social classes by providing an incorporating framework from the various literatures on socialization, stratification and political behaviour. In the area of ownership and control, the task involves both theoretical and methodological efforts. The arguments that either competitive or monopoly ownership promotes consensus or favours dominant interests cannot be confirmed through the analysis of social origins or through studies of content in isolation. Such arguments are based instead on a thesis of "general omission" (see Breed, 1958) and would be better approached through an understanding of what is left out of mass media content as well as the economic, legal, political, technological and production constraints on media organizations in relation to the structural features of industrial market economies. Analyses of the technological and organizational features of media production (Donohew et. al., 1972; Janowitz, 1975; Tunstall, 1971; Tuchman, 1973) have a place in the general empirical tradition of the sociology of work and, indeed, remembering Weber's concern with the

rationalization of an increasingly bureaucratic modern press, such inquiries make an important contribution to the literature on the labour process. Concern with economic and non-economic structures shaping mass media is relatively undeveloped as a research area but is precipitating some theoretical interest, especially from the neo-Marxist writers. This structural orientation is one of central importance to the study of Canadian media because it goes beyond the analysis of the functions qua effects of media in a market economy directing needed attention to Canada's international economic and political position as well as to the role of federal regulation and the question of public ownership.

Recent neo-Marxist work on the nature of the capitalist state provides the basis for a suitable theoretical framework for such an analysis, especially discussions of the state's "mandate" to create and maintain the conditions of capital accumulation. The relevance of this orientation is in its spelling out of the state's legitimization functions through the analysis of symbols and sources of public support (see, e.g., representative readings in Lindberg, et. al., 1975). An ideal candidate for such an inquiry is the question of jurisdiction over the cable communications system in Canada.

A macroscopic, structural orientation would necessarily examine U.S.-Canadian political and economic links as well as Canadian federal and provincial relations and the role of federal regulatory agencies. Such an approach conceptualizes the media not simply as a tool of economic and political interests but as an auxiliary of

either the economy or the state, depending on historically specific circumstances. In the case of Canadian development, at times the economy has influenced the nature of media regulation, as in the case for the creation of the privately-owned television networks, and, at other times, the state in its political legitimacy function has intervened with clear opposition from economic interests, as in the case of establishing Canadian content and ownership regulations. This type of orientation breaks out of the "media determinism" which characterizes so much of the discipline and acknowledges that the media, as "mediators", are more acted upon than they are actors. In addition, this approach by focusing on actual relations and policy decisions helps bridge the inferential gap from the structure of media to the ideological superstructure. This problem, as we have seen, flaws a great deal of the research, whether it be the behavioural approach to media's societal effects, content analysis or inquiries into the social origins and socialization of media management and personnel.

The framework for the establishment of media sociology within the boundaries of the power and stratification tradition is hinted at in the work of Marx, Weber, and more recently, in statements by Miliband, Westergaard and most forcibly by Murdock and Golding:

...the sociological study of mass communications should not be seen as a self-contained professional specialism, and still less as one element in a grand multi-disciplinary approach to "communications", but as a part of an overall study of social and cultural reproduction which has traditionally occupied the heartland of sociological analysis.

In the case of advanced capitalist societies of North America and Western Europe with which we are specifically concerned here, this means that the sociology of mass communications should derive from, and feed into, the continuing debate on the nature and persistence of class stratification. More particularly, media sociology should address itself to the central problem of explaining how radical inequalities in the distribution of rewards come to be presented as natural and inevitable and are understood as such by those who benefit least from this distribution. In short, our argument is that media studies should be incorporated into the wider study of stratification and legitimation (Murdock and Golding, 1977: 12).

What constitutes the basic assumptions of such an orientation and where does it lead the sociologist? The obvious point of departure is the realization that inequality in the distribution of social resources is a fundamental yet variable feature of modern societies. A media sociology would necessarily focus on the relationship between the unequal distribution of control over mass communications, at the levels of ownership and production of content, and the wider societal patterns of inequality. At the national level, this would center on the media's relationship to both the economy and the state, especially the media's functions in the market system and the process of legitimation through which structures of inequality are maintained and reproduced. At the international level, this form of media sociology would address the transfer of technology and programming between industrialized and developing countries as an indication of unequal exchange between center and periphery in a system of global stratification.

The advantage of this orientation lies in its attempt to link theoretically what has only been implicit in traditional approaches, the connection between media as an industry and as a transmitter of ideology. This synthesis is never achieved in the prevailing Lasswellian paradigm which compartmentalizes source, channel and receiver effects. As an industry, the media in modern market systems are subject to a variety of economic, political and legal constraints, not the least of which is the maximization of profit subject to strict government regulation. As a transmitter of values, the media serve as mediators and translators among social groups as well as agents of legitimation for the existing social order. When viewed in relation to stratification and class structure, the material base and the ideological functions of the media merge. Although this link between mass communications and social class has been the focus of recent inquiries, these isolated empirical findings on sex role portrayal, media use by the urban poor and ethnic stereotyping await integration into an holistic perspective. A power and stratification orientation not only shifts attention from the fruitless search after short-term media effects but directly links communications systems with the other social institutions and agencies which channel social groups through the stratification system. This orientation calls for a new focus on the roles assumed by the family, the educational and the occupational agencies in the distribution of social knowledge and resources and the acquisition of cultural and social skills through the mass media. Finally, the theoretical concern with legitimation would inevitably lead to queries of the nature of the relationship between media and the fostering or curbing of social dissent and political movements.

Contrary to the popular verdict, mass media studies suffer neither from a paucity of theory nor from empirical overkill. They are flawed primarily because of their lack of direction and a unifying theme. Thus this essay concludes with a call to bring mass media back into the mainstream of sociological inquiry. This central focus of sociology is the study of power and stratification. The specification of the nature of the link between media systems and the distribution of power and social resources may finally provide the appropriate entrée for situating the study of mass communications in sociology proper. This is not a novel strategy. Indeed, similar approaches are currently advocated for the incorporation of schooling research and studies of deviance. This orientation poses important yet relatively unexplored questions, the most general of which include defining media as a system of production, the analysis of its specialized occupations and internal power structure as well as its relation to class structure through its ideological and cultural functions. By focusing on these features of media in society we may at last develop a sociology of mass communications, one that provides the missing links between what we "say", in the form of our theorizing about the media, and what we "know", in the form of the enormous body of empirical findings on the nature and role of mass communication in contemporary society.

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